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A SKYWALD HORROR-MOOD MAGAZINE

MACABRE COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

NIGHTMARE

YEARBOOK

edited by ALAN HEWETSON

1974

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WRITTEN BY ALAN HEWETSON
ILLUSTRATED BY BOB MARTIN

THE GOD OF THE DEAD

WHEN THOSE MORONS BURNED-OUT THIS CASTLE THEY KILLED A NOBLE STRUCTURE...
...THEY KILLED CULTURE AND HERITAGE -- SOMETHING THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND...
...BETTER EVERY SINGLE MAN AND WOMAN AND CHILD DIE THAN A MANSION SUCH AS THIS...

I HAVE BEEN ALIVE BUT 4 DAYS, A VAMPIRE BUT 3 DAYS...
...THE FIRST MALE VAMPIRE OF ALL EARTH OF ALL TIME...
...AND I SHALL USE MY POWERS TO DESTROY MY ENEMIES...

FOR IN THE 3 DAYS OF MY EXISTENCE, I HAVE FILLED THE VILLAGE CRYPTS WITH MORE DEAD THAN THE BLACK PLAGUE...
...I HAVE TAUGHT THIS WRETCHED TOWN LESSONS IN NOBLE WRATH...
...BUT TONIGHT... WITH THE DEAD AS MY SERVANTS -- I SHALL TEACH THOSE PEASANTS A LITTLE MORE THAN... SIMPLE WRATH...
...I SHALL DESTROY THEM MAKING THEIR DAUGHTERS PERFORM THE ULTIMATE ACT OF VENGEANCE...
...MY DAUGHTERS OF DEATH, WILL KILL THEIR PARENTS...

THESE GRAVES ONLY **DAYS** AGO DID NOT EVEN **EXIST**...

... RATHER **REMARKABLE** AND **PROFOUND** WHEN I THINK OF IT...

TO THINK THAT **I**, LIKE A HUMAN SEED, CAN SPREAD MYSELF OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND CAN **POTENTIALLY** ENSLAVE **3 MILLION** WOMEN, MORE OR LESS...

...REMARKABLE AND PROFOUND...

RISE UP MY **DEAD THINGS**...

... **RISE UP** AND **OUT** YOUR **MAUSOLEUMS**... YOUR **MASTER DEMANDS IT**...

COME TO ME NOW... MY BEAUTIFUL BEVY OF DEAD ONES...
...COME TO MY ARMS...
NOW AS YOUR GENERAL, I WILL LEAD YOU INTO THE PLACES OF YOUR BIRTHS...
...AS AN ARMY OF THE DEAD...
...EACH ONE OF YOU UNTO HIS OWN HOME -- WHERE WITHOUT REGARD FOR BLOODLINES -- YOU SHALL KILL...

...HELLO FATHER...
E-EVANGELINE!!
...HELLO...

NOW **BRING** THEM TO ME, MY **CHILDREN**...

... BRING YOUR **HALF-DEAD, TORMENTED PARENTS** TO **ME**...

WHAT SORT OF **MONSTER** ARE YOU? YOU TAKE THE LIVES OF OUR **CHILDREN**, OUR MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR BEING, AND WHEN WE **BURY** THEM YOU **DIG THEM** OUT OF THEIR **GRAVES** AND ENSLAVE THEM TO YOUR WRETCHED **WILL**...

CALM YOURSELF BURGERMASTER...

CALM MYSELF?

WHY SHOULD I **CALM MYSELF** WHEN YOU MEAN TO **MURDER** MY **VILLAGE**-- WHEN YOU HAVE **ALREADY KILLED, BRUTALLY, ALL OUR CHILDREN!!**

THAT WAS QUITE A PRETTY LITTLE **SPEECH** BURGERMASTER...

SO... IT IS **ME** YOU TRY TO **IMPRESS**-- WELL, YOU DON'T **IMPRESS** ME, YOU DON'T DENT MY ARMOUR IN ANY WAY...

...YOU DON'T EVEN **AMUSE** ME...

...BUT... YOU **WILL** AMUSE ME... YOU WILL CERTAINLY SERVE AT LEAST **ONE** PURPOSE!

...WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO **IMPRESS? ME?** OR YOUR **'FELLOW VILLAGERS'?** FOR **THEY**, IT IS OBVIOUS, ARE **NOT IMPRESSED** BY YOUR **MELODRAMATIC** PLEADING...

...**THEY**... IT IS **OBVIOUS**, ARE READY TO **LIE DOWN** AND **DIE**, OR AT THE **VERY LEAST**, **SUBJUGATE** THEMSELVES **COMPLETELY** TO ME...

THIS, I TAKE IT BURGERMASTER IS YOUR FAMILY SURROUNDING YOU...

...AND IS IT NOT ALSO TRUE THAT THIS GIRL ON MY ARM, WHOM YOU ONCE CALLED MAGDELINE, WHO IS NOW AN UNDEAD SLAVE TO ME, WHO IS NOW NO MORE A PART OF YOU OR AN OFFSPRING OF YOU THAN--THAN I AM... IS IT NOT TRUE YOU FEAR HER?

...FEAR HER?... WHY SHOULD I FEAR MY OWN DAUGHTER...

YOU STILL CLAIM HER AS YOUR DAUGHTER? WELL, YOU SHOULD FEAR HER FOR THE SAME REASON THE OTHER VILLAGERS NOW FEAR THEIR DEAD DAUGHTERS...

...BECAUSE--SHE IS MORE DEAD THAN NOT... MORE EVIL THAN NOT... MORE GROTESQUERY IS IN HER HEART NOW THAN YOU IN YOUR LIFE HAVE EVER IMAGINED...

MAGDELINE--DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS MAN IS?

...NO... I KNOW ONLY YOU!

DAUGHTER!

...KILL HIM GIRL... THEN THIS WHOLE FAMILY... DRAIN THEIR VEINS DRY... DO NOT LET THEM CONTINUE TO BREATHE... EVEN AS UNDEADS...

...KILL THEM...

...OHO YOU OLD FOOL--YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING BY DEMEANING YOURSELF THUS...

MAGGY... I'M YOUR FATHER... DON'T YOU KNOW ME, LITTLE ONE...

...NO...

WHAT'S **WRONG** WITH YOU MISTER? WHY ARE YOU **DOING** THIS? DON'T YOU GO TO **CHURCH**...

CHURCH? HAHAHAHA-- CHILD--I AM A **GOD** MYSELF...

MAYBE MISTER ...BUT HERE...

WHAT IS THIS?

...A SIGN OF OUR CHURCH...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN A SIGN OF---

AHHHH!!

AHH AHHHHHH

...DRACULA DIES AS ABRUPTLY AS HE WAS BORN, IN AN INSTANT...
...IN AN INSTANT OF EVIL HE WAS BORN...
...IN AN INSTANT OF GOOD HE DIED...
...IN AN ABRUPT, CHAOTIC INSTANT THE FORCES OF GOOD SLIPPED THROUGH DRACULA'S EVIL DEFENCES, BUT THO THE FORCES OF GOOD WERE PHYSICALLY SMALL THEY WERE PHILOSOPHICALLY GREAT AND POWERFUL...
...SO, WHAT NOW CAN BE SAID OF THE GOD OF ALL THE DEAD!— HIS SUCCESSORS, ALL THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES DRACULA BUT WHO, OF COURSE, ARE NOT DRACULA, WILL NEVER LIVE UP TO THE CARNAGE AND DEATH THE TRUE PRINCE OF DARKNESS PERFORMED WITHIN A MERE FOUR DAYS...
...SO, WITHOUT BEING FACETIOUS, DON'T BELIEVE ALL YOU READ, DEAR READER... THE DRACULA'S YOU READ ARE NOT MERELY PHONIES, THEY ARE INSIGNIFICANT PHONIES--FOR THEIR 'ADVENTURES' ARE DULL-WITTED, AND THEIR 'POWERS' ARE LIMITED...
...THERE WAS ONLY ONE DRACULA, ONLY ONE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, A CORRUPT SAD MONARCH NAMED VLAD THE IMPALER, WHO ROSE OUT OF HIS GRAVE TO BECOME THE FATHER OF ALL VAMPIRES, WHO LIVED A MISERABLE FOUR DAYS BEFORE HE WAS CONQUERED BY A CHILD...
A CHILD WHO DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HE WAS DOING...

THE SAGA OF THE HUMAN GARGOYLES

THE ILLUSTRATED HORROR MASTERPIECE BY

ARCHAIC ALAN HEWETSON

MACABRE MAELO CINTRON

Returning to the HORROR-MOOD pages after an absence of a few issues, due to sickness (the artist Cintron, was in an Asylum!) THE HUMAN GARGOYLES is again capturing the hearts of readers and critics alike! Often hailed as the single most important character - series in the entire HORROR - MOOD, THE HUMAN GARGOYLES are here to stay.

This month (on sale now) they appear in

PSYCHO

(due to NIGHTMARE being a SPECIAL YEARBOOK this month) next month, THE HUMAN GARGOYLES return to

NIGHTMARE

August - on sale June 27 - miss 'em not —

— and eagerly await the special cover story coming up soon —

DRACULA IS ALIVE (?) AND EVIL IN THIS 1974 NIGHTMARE YEAR BOOK

This is the NIGHTMARE YEARBOOK, featuring oddly gathered goodies from the first 6 issues of PSYCHO and NIGHTMARE, plus an all-new, all-original tale of horror by brand-new Horror-Mood-team artist Bob Martin — DRACULA — GOD OF THE DEAD!

Emotionally-disturbed ED FEDORY is presently working on some of the most bizarre tales of his career — like WHO ARE THEY? THE BREEDERS, to be illustrated by LUIS COLLADO, and THE CLAWS OF DEATH, to be illustrated by new, weird Spanish CABRERIZO - both will appear soon in the HORROR-MOOD pages!

Mr. awkward AUGUSTINE FUNNELL, meanwhile, is busy on his terror-tales: WHEN I WAS A BOY I WATCHED THE BLOOD WOLVES, and DUNGEON OF THE DAMNED, both to be illustrated by popular HORROR-MOOD illustrator, LURID LUIS COLLADO. Funnell's tale: DOWN TO HADES TO DIE! will be illustrated by another new Mood-team artist PUIGAGUT, an artist as interesting as his lunatic name!

ARCHAIC AL, besides archaic editorial duties, is drafing a few tales of suspense for your horor-entertainment — like: KILL, KILL, KILL, KILL AND KILL AGAIN, to be illustrated by FERRAN SOSTRES, and THE MUMMY KHAFRE, a brand new character planned for the first issue of TOMB OF HORROR, and to be illustrated by CESAR LOPEZ, the artist for our now-regular FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER saga!

. . . strange correspondence from beyond the grave (it would seem), sent to us by GARY ANDERSON of Tulsa, Oklahoma — "I recently read Nightmare #18 and I found that one of my descendants, Chris Roose wrote a letter to your magazine. Yes, I did say one of MY descendants. You see my life didn't actually end in 1849, in fact it was my birth into a new life. In reality, to put it in a word, I was reincarnated! But not as a dog, cat, horse, or another lowly beast. In a way I was lucky, I was reincarnated as a person, so I can do further writings. With my second life I'm going to try to do everything I couldn't in my first, and I wish to thank you people at Skywald Publishing for making me feel that my first life wasn't a total waste after all by printing some of my writings, even if you do change them a bit, I already had one of my first works of my second life printed in one of your magazines - it appeared in the 1973 Nightmare Winter Special - I was winner number 8 of your gargoyle egg contest. I signed it Gary W. Anderson, which is the name people call my second embodiment. I'll be writing to you again sometime but for now my thanks for your great work on my behalf.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Writing under the hand of GARY W. ANDERSON

Drop us a line and let us know how you enjoyed this NIGHTMARE YEARBOOK — fill in the little coupon so we know which is your favorite story — so we can aim to please you in the future! And (lest we forget) don't forget to check the HORROR MOOD newstands for

my favorite story this issue is :

comment :

name : **age :**

address :

city n' other :

mail to : SKYWALD BEST STORY
Skywald Publishing Corporation
18 East 41st Street Rm 1501
New York City, N.Y. 10017

PSYCHO #20 and SCREAM #7 now on sale.

R.I.P.

ARCHAIC AL

THE HUMAN GARGOYLES appear in

PSYCHO

now on sale!
-miss it not!-

...SHE HAD BEEN *SEIZED* BY *EPILEPSY* AND HAD *FAINTED-DEAD* IN THE *SIGHT* OF THE *SERVANT-GIRL*...

...WE BURIED *BERENICE* IN THE *FAMILY PLOT* IN THE *CASTLE GROUNDS* THE FOLLOWING DAY...

...I THEN WENT TO THE *LIBRARY*-- AND DID NOT *LEAVE* FOR *SEVERAL DAYS*... ALL THE TIME I MERELY *THOUGHT* OF HER...AND OF HER *TEETH*... OF HER *TEETH* THAT POSSESSED ME...

BERENICE

is in

SCREAM

The masterpiece of Horror by EDGAR ALLAN POE is now on sale at your horror-mood newsstand — the tale of a man driven mad by his passion and love for a girl — even after the grave!— illustrated by rancid RICARDO VILLAMONTE!

ROTTIN'

DEAL

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
BRUCE JONES

THE BROILING DESERT SUN BEAT DOWN RELENTLESSLY ON THE SMALL ENCAMPMENT TENT NESTLED SECURELY BESIDE THE SHIMMERING OASIS. WITHIN ITS CANVAS CONFINES THE OLD MAN'S VOICE BROKE THE HEAVY SILENCE OF THE WASTELANDS.

FELIX TOWNSEND PULLED THE HEAVY DESERT BOOTS ON WITH A GROAN AND ADDRESSED HIS YOUNG NEPHEW PETER WITH AN AGED SMILE...

ACCORDING TO THE MAP THAT OLD PROSPECTOR SOLD ME, THE MINE IS ABOUT FIVE DAYS JOURNEY FROM HERE!

YOU SENILE OLD GOAT. ANY FOOL KNOWS THAT "LOST MINE" ROUTINE IS THE OLDEST CON GAME IN THE WORLD...AND YOU PAID FIFTY BUCKS FOR THE MAP...

THE AGING UNCLE'S WRINKLED HAND OPENED HIS FIELD JACKET AND PATTED THE SHEATH OF PAPERS IN ITS LINING. HE NODDED AT PETER...

MAP OF REGION

YOU'VE BEEN GOOD COMPANY TO AN OLD MAN THESE LAST FEW YEARS, PETER. I'M SHOWING MY APPRECIATION BY REMEMBERING YOU IN ***MY WILL!***

PETER STARED HUNGRILY AT THE PAPERS. HE'D WAITED MONTHS JUST TO HEAR THOSE WORDS. THE LONG HOURS OF BOREDOM WITH HIS UNCLE HAD PAID OFF...

OUR JOURNEY WILL BE MADE ON ***FOOT***, PETER. THE TERRAIN IS TOO ***ROUGH*** FOR ANY VEHICLE.

THE WATER HOLES ARE ***SPACED*** ALMOST EXACTLY A ***DAY APART!*** WE HAVE ***ONE*** CANTEEN APIECE. BE SURE TO ***RATION*** YOUR WATER ACCORDINGLY...

PETER HAD SHRUGGED IN AGREEMENT. HE FIGURED THE OLD MAN WOULDN'T LAST THREE HOURS IN THE SWELTERING HEAT AND WOULD ABANDON THE CRAZY SCHEME BEFORE THE DAY WAS OUT. BUT THE WITHERED DESERT RAT PROVED HEALTHIER THAN HIS NEPHEW HAD ANTICIPATED AND IT WAS PETER WHO STUMBLED TO HIS KNEES IN EXHAUSTION BY MID-AFTERNOON...

I'M ***DYING!*** HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN ***THREE HOURS...*** C-CAN'T MAKE IT!

GET UP, BOY! WE CAN'T STOP NOW! I TOLD YOU TO ***CONSERVE*** YOUR WATER...

THERE...UP AHEAD! IT'S THE ***FIRST*** OASIS!

SO IT WENT. AT THE END OF EACH SCORCHING DAY A SHIMMERING POOL OF LIFE-GIVING WATER LAY WAITING FOR THEIR THIRSTY BELLIES AND EMPTY CANTEENS. BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE THIRD OASIS, PETER'S PATIENCE AND STRENGTH WERE WEARING THIN...

WHY SHOULD I **WAIT**? I'LL BE AN **OLD MAN** MYSELF BY THE TIME HE KICKS THE BUCKET. IF I PLANNED IT **RIGHT** IT WOULD LOOK LIKE AN **ACCIDENT!**

IS THAT YOU, NEPHEW-- ***UHHH!***

WHO ELSE YOU STUPID OLD FOOL!

PETER! WHY?...

BECAUSE I'M *TIRED* OF *WAITING*, UNCLE FELIX!

HIS *CANTEEN!*

PETER STRUCK THEN, AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH THE JAGGED ROCK, UNTIL THE CLEAR DESERT POOL MUDDIED CRIMSON AND THE OLD MAN'S LIFE EBBED AWAY IN A FEEBLE TRAIL OF BUBBLES. A BRIGHT GLINT OF METAL WINKED AT PETER FROM BENEATH THE RIPPLING SURFACE.

PETER REACHED DOWN AND LIFTED THE SHINY RECEPTACLE FROM THE QUIET FORM...

YOU WON'T **NEED** THIS NOW, UNCLE, AND IT'LL MAKE THE RETURN TRIP **TWICE** AS **EASY** ON ME!

BY MID-AFTERNOON OF THE NEXT DAY PETER WAS GREEDILY EMPTYING HIS OWN CANTEEN INTO HIS DUSTY GULLET. IT SEEMED TWICE AS HOT NOW AS THE DAY BEFORE...

BLASTED HEAT! GOOD I'VE GOT PLENTY OF WATER!

THERE SHE IS! AND IT'S ABOUT TIME!

THE COOLING WATER HAD ALMOST TOUCHED HIS LIPS WHEN SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION FROM THE CENTER OF THE OASIS. THE BLOATED PULPY FIGURE BOBBED TO THE SURFACE AND STARED HIDEOUSLY AT HIM WITH SIGHTLESS EYES...PETER SCREAMED...

UNCLE FELIX! MY GOD! HOW IN THE NAME OF HADES DID HE GET HERE?

COYOTES MUST HAVE DRAGGED HIM HERE LAST NIGHT! LORD HE STINKS! I CAN'T DRINK THE WATER NOW...HIS CORPSE HAS POLLUTED IT!

I'VE STILL GOT HIS CANTEEN! I CAN MAKE IT ON THAT!..TRAVEL BY NIGHT! YOU OLD VULTURE.. I'M NOT LICKED YET!

SO HE WALKED INTO THE FREEZING DESERT NIGHT, HIS UNCLE'S CANTEEN SWINGING BESIDE HIM. BY SUNRISE THE LAST OF THE PRECIOUS WATER HAD PASSED OVER HIS PARCHED LIPS ...HE SEARCHED THE HORIZON DESPERATELY!

THAT'S IT! I'D BETTER BE ON THE RIGHT TRAIL!

THE OASIS! THERE IT IS!

NO!

NO!

THE REEKING SLIME-COVERED HEAD FLOATED LAZILY IN THE WATER, ITS ROTTED FLESH FILLING THE DESERT AIR WITH STOMACH-CHURNING ODOR, TAINTING THE COOL LIQUID AROUND IT WITH PUTRESCENCE. PETER SHUDDERED, CHOKING BACK HIS VOMIT...

HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SWIM AS THE GROTESQUE FACE DANCED BEFORE HIM, GRINNING IDIOTICALLY...

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! I'M GOING MAD FROM THIRST! THAT'S IT! HE'S A MIRAGE!

BUT INSIDE, HE KNEW THE HIDEOUS THING IN THE OASIS WAS AS REAL AS THE DUST ON HIS SWOLLEN TONGUE. HE WIPED THE SWEAT FROM HIS FOREHEAD WITH A SHAKING HAND AND TURNED BACK TOWARD THE DESERT...

GOT TO MAKE IT TO THE LAST WATER HOLE BEFORE HE GETS THERE... GOT TO BEAT HIM!

WEAK WITH THIRST AND EXPOSURE, PETER STRUGGLED DESPERATELY FOR THE ENCAMPMENT TENT MILES AWAY AND THE FINAL OASIS BESIDE IT. MERCIFULLY THE SKY DARKENED, BLOTTING OUT THE SUN. THEN TO HIS HORROR HE REALIZED IT WAS A...

SAND STORM! I'LL BE BURIED OUT HERE!

PETER FASTENED HIS BANDANA ABOUT HIS FACE AND PUSHED INTO THE BLINDING, WHIRLING SAND. IT WAS THEN HE NOTICED THE DIM SILHOUETTE MOVING ALONG BESIDE HIM...

SOMEONE'S OUT THERE!

HE SQUINTED INTO THE HOWLING GALE AND DREW CLOSER TO THE STUMBLING FIGURE. FROM OUT OF THE SWIRLING STORM LOOMED THE HORRID MUTILATED FACE...

THE ROTTED TEETERING THING WAS KEEPING PACE WITH HIM, CHUNKS OF DECAYING FLESH AND MAGGOTY BONE FALLING FROM ITS STUMBLING HULK, LEAVING A TRAIL OF RANCID GORE BEHIND IT...

UNCLE FELIX!! ⸗CHOKE⸗ HE'S TRYING TO BEAT ME TO THE WATER!

PETER DROVE HIMSELF ON THE QUAKING LEGS, A COLD FEAR CLUTCHING HIS HEART...

CAN'T LET IT WIN!..GOT TO OUTDISTANCE HIM!

SEEMINGLY YEARS LATER THE STORM ABATED. PETER, CRAWLING ON BLOODIED HAND HANDS AND KNEES, GAZED ABOUT HIMSELF DELIRIOUSLY...

WAS IT AN **HALLUCINATION**? DID I JUST *IMAGINE*-- WHAT'S *THIS? TRACKS!* GOD, IT'S *AHEAD* OF ME!

WITH A STRENGTH BORN OF MADNESS, PETER PUSHED UP AND HOBBLED AFTER THE GRISLY TRAIL LEFT BY THE THING. MILES LATER HE FOUND IT, TRUDGING RELENTLESSLY ON, FILLING THE ACRID AIR WITH ITS STENCH...

IT HASN'T *REACHED* THE *OASIS* YET!

THE LAST OF HIS WILL FADING, PETER SCRAMBLED CRAZILY ACROSS THE BURNING SAND, PASSED THE GRINNING HORROR, AND FELL HEADLONG INTO THE RELIEF-GIVING POOL...

SCOOPING FRANTICALLY WITH TORN FINGERS HE FILLED HIS ACHING STOMACH WITH THE COOLING LIQUID UNTIL HIS GUTS BURNED AND LUNGS BEGGED FOR AIR...THEN HE LAY GIGGLING QUIETLY...

HEH-HEH-HEH!

THERE WAS A NOISE BEHIND HIM, SHUFFLING OF DRY DECAYED FEET. PETER TURNED IN TIME TO SEE THE CORPSE OF HIS UNCLE TOPPLE INTO THE *OASIS*...

HA-HA! I WON, YOU BLOATED ***HORROR!*** I'VE ***HAD*** MY DRINK ALREADY...HEH-HEH... ***I BEAT YOU!***

REVIVED NOW, FLUSHED WITH VICTORY, PETER WALKED ON UNSTEADY LEGS TO THE SHADE OF THE TENT AND THREW OPEN THE FLAP. IT TOOK A MOMENT FOR HIS EYES TO ADJUST THEMSELVES TO THE DARKNESS WITHIN, THEN HE ENTERED...

WITH SHAKING FINGERS HE WITHDREW THE SHEATH OF PAPERS FROM THE OLD MAN'S JACKET AND OPENED IT...

AT LAST... ALL MINE!...

WHA... THIS ISN'T A *WILL*... IT'S A *MEDICAL REPORT!*

LAVERNE RESEARCH

MR. FELIX TOWNSEND
428 CHIPAWA LANE
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

EAR MR. TOWNSEND:
HIS IS TO CONFIRM EARLIER PROGNOSIS O
"OUR CONDITION. AFTER EXTENSIVE TES
OUR FINDING INDICATE MARKED EVIDENC
HANSEN'S DISEASE WHICH YOU CONTR
OME MONTHS AGO

LEPROSY! HIS *CANTEEN!* I...I *DRANK* FROM HIS--

--C...CANTEEN...

AGH-H-HH!

ACM LOTIO

The END

Let the Dreamer Beware

DO NOT LET THE RASH MORTAL ESCAPE, HIDEOUS ONES!
THEY WON'T GET ME *IF* I CAN REACH THAT EERIE GATEWAY BETWEEN THIS LAND OF BAD DREAMS AND THE WORLD OF REALITY ...IN *TIME!*
REESE

WRITTEN BY JERRY SEIGEL ILLUSTRATED BY RALPH REESE

SOME PEOPLE ARE CURSED WITH LEPROSY...

HE IS PAYING BITTERLY FOR THE SINS OF A HUNDRED REINCARNATIONS!

I BEG YOU... ALMS...

KEEP AWAY!

IT IS WHISPERED THAT A CERTAIN UNFORTUNATE MAN EXISTS WHO IS CURSED BY HAVING BEEN BORN WITH ***HORNS***...

DO YOU STILL LOVE ME, NOW THAT YOU KNOW MY ***SECRET?***

GET OUT OF MY SIGHT FOREVER, YOU--YOU SPAWN OF SATAN!

NOW MEET ALEX NIMBO WHO IS AFFLICTED WITH ONE OF THE MOST LOATHSOME MALADIES THAT EVER BESET MORTAL MAN--A LAZY, ***NAGGING*** WIFE...

IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO DO HOUSE WORK FOR A NOBODY LIKE YOU, YOU'RE CRAZY! SCRAPE THAT FLOOR AND GIVE IT ***THREE*** COATS OF VARNISH!

VILE, SOUR-MOUTHED SLAVE-DRIVER!

OFTEN WHEN ALEX CAME HOME LATE FROM HIS STRENUOUS JOB AT THE PAPER MILL...

YOU MEAN I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE A ***NOT*** MEAL?

YOU CAN HEAT THAT CAN OF SARDINES FOR ALL I CARE!

YOU GOT HANDS! OPEN THE CAN! YOU GOT TEETH? EAT WHAT'S IN IT!

AND WHEN ALEX SWALLOWS HIS PRIDE AND SEEKS EVEN A CRUMB OF AFFECTION...

I'M A MAN WITH NORMAL PHYSIOLOGICAL URGES, AND I WANT...UH...

THIS IS WHAT YOU'LL GET...

FLORENCE, I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS MUCH LONGER!

MAYBE IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ***BOTH*** OF US TO GET A DIVORCE!

YOU AIN'T GETTIN' NO DIVORCE OUTTA ME, MISTER! YOU EARN TOO LITTLE TO PAY MUCH ALIMONY!

AND IF YOU THINK I'M GONNA WORK TO SUPPORT MYSELF WHEN I GOT YOU WHERE I WANT YOU, YOU'RE ***CRAZY!***

SPIT!

IF YOU DARE MENTION ***DIVORCE*** TO ME AGAIN, I'LL HAVE ONE OF MY BROTHERS BREAK EVERY BONE IN YOUR STUPID BODY!

AND YOU KNOW WHICH BROTHER I MEAN--PHIL, WHO JUST GOT OUT OF THE ASYLUM!

PHIL LIKES... ***HURTING*** PEOPLE!... I--CAN'T--STAND-PAIN...

SLEEP IS SLOW IN COMING TO THE TRAPPED, EMBITTERED HUMAN BEING KNOWN AS ALEX NIMBO...

NO WAY OUT! I'M THE LEGAL PRISONER OF A ***LEECH!***

FLORENCE IS SUCKING AWAY ANY CHANCE FOR HAPPINESS I MIGHT HAVE HAD!

I'M HUMAN! I HAVE A RIGHT TO ***REAL*** LOVE...

IF ONLY I COULD FIND IT...

SOMEWHERE... ANYWHERE... I'D...

I'D SACRIFICE ANYTHING...

TO...GET IT...

AS BODILY WEARINESS FORCES HIS RESENTMENTS TO DWINDLE, ONLY ALEX'S INTENSE ROMANTIC YEARNINGS REMAIN, AS SLEEP...TAKES...OVER...

A MINI-INSTANT LATER, ALEX IS AFLOAT AMIDST AN EPHEMERAL WORLD OF SENSES-DAZZLING BEAUTY...

EVERYWHERE... ABOUT ME--LOVELINESS THAT THRILLS AND INSPIRES...

PERMEATING ALL... A SUBTLE, SUBLIME FRAGRANCE THAT ENCHANTS AND EXPANDS THE SENSES! SOOTHING AWAY ALL PSYCHO-NEUROTIC SYMPTOMS...

MY HEART MY SOUL--ARE EXPERIENCING AN ALMOST ***EXPLOSIVE JOY!***

BORN ALONG BY A MYSTICALLY VIBRANT CURRENT, ALEX RAPTLY OBSERVES MORE DELIGHTS...

EVERYONE IS RADIANTLY ATTRACTIVE! I SENSE THESE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE ***WANT*** ME HERE WITH ***THEM!***

AND AS THE STRANGE CURRENT WHISKS ALEX ALONG EVER-MORE-SWIFTLY...

I SENSE I'M BEING TRANSPORTED SOMEWHERE FOR SOME VERY *SPECIAL PURPOSE!*

EVEN IF THIS *IS* ONLY A DREAM... I LOVE EVERY MARVELOUS INSTANT OF IT! BUT *WHERE* AM I GOING? AND FOR *WHAT* PURPOSE?

ABRUPTLY, ALEX'S FORM HALTS HOVERING BEFORE A GIGANTIC, EXOTIC BEAUTY...

I WHO AM KNOWN AS *DILEETH* HAVE BEEN WAITING EONS FOR YOU, ALEX NIMBO! I KNOW THE FULL POWER AND MAGNIFICENCE WHICH HAS BEEN REPRESSED WITHIN YOU *TOO* LONG!

I'M... ENLARGING!

AND AS THE EXPANDED ALEX SOON EQUALS THE GIANTESS IN STATURE...

I HAVE HUNGERED ...YEARNED... FOR YOU FOR UNTOLD ETERNITIES!

I LOVE YOU, ALEX! SUPREMELY! TOTALLY!

BUT WHY *ME?* THERE ARE SO MANY MEN IN THIS... ER... DREAM WORLD HANDSOMER THAN ME!

NO MORE QUESTIONS! HERE IN THIS EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL PLANE... YOU AND I SHARE A CHARISMATIC LOVE SO RARE... SO INFINITE... THAT WE WILL BE THE ENVY OF THE DIMENSIONAL DEITIES THEMSELVES!

YES, *DILEETH*-- YES!!

THEN THE VIBRATORY CURRENT WHICH HAD BRIEFLY DWINDLED, RESUMES ITS INTENSITY AND SNATCHES ALEX AWAY...

NO! NO! I'M BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU! I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU *EVER!*

HELP ME REMAIN HERE! I BEG YOU, *DILEETH!*

YOU *CAN* RETURN, FOR TIME WITHOUT END, IF YOU DARE PAY THE *PRICE...*

NAME THE PRICE...

THE PRICE IS ABSURDLY SMALL! *KILL* THE FOUL-MOUTHED HARRIDAN, YOUR WIFE, FLORENCE!

BUT, IF I MURDER HER, THE LAW OF MEN W-WILL *EXECUTE* ME FOR THE CRIME!

NOT SO, BE-LOVED! ONCE THE DEED IS DONE... JUST DOZE OFF... AND YOU SHALL BE TRANSPORTED BACK TO THIS DOMAIN TO THE WAITING ARMS OF *DILEETH!*

I'LL DO IT!!

A SPIT-INSTANT AFTERWARD, ALEX OPENS HIS EYES TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF A HATEFULLY SHRIEKING VOICE ...

SERVE ME BREAKFAST IN BED YOU DUMBHEAD YOU!

AND USE THAT DEODORANT I MADE YOU BUY! YOU *STINK!*

FOR ONCE, ALEX ENJOYS OBEYING ONE OF FLORENCE'S COMMANDS...

UGH! WHAT MAKES THIS GARBAGE TASTE SO *AWFUL!*

QUITE POSSIBLY, THE *RAT-POISON* I ADDED...

;*GASP*; I'LL TELL THE POLICE EVERYTHING--ON THE PHONE! YOU'LL *BURN* FOR THIS, YOU LOUSY ROTTEN... MURDERER... *AAARGHH...*

SHE'LL BE DEAD QUICKLY!

THUDD!

NO FUSS, NO WORRY, ABOUT WHAT THE LAW WOULD DO TO ME! AFTER I SWALLOW A FEW OF THESE SLEEPING PILLS...

I'LL BE IN THAT GLORIOUS DREAM WORLD...REUNITED WITH DEAR *LILEETH* FOREVER AND EVER AND *EVER...*

THE PILLS DOWNED, NIMBO'S TRANSITION TO THE SLUMBER-DIMENSION OCCURS WITH STARTLING ABRUPTNESS...

WHY ARE THEY SMILING AT ME SO PECULIARLY? LIKE *CATS* -- AT A *MOUSE?!*

GREEE-YAAH! THEY'RE *DEMONS* WHO DISGUISED THEMSELVES INTO LOOKING BEAUTIFUL...

...TO TRICK ME INTO DOING THEIR *EVIL WILL!*

I-I'VE GOT TO GET *OUT* OF THIS DREAM-WORLD OF HORROR, BACK TO THE NORMAL WORLD OF THE *LIVING!*

S-SUDDENLY EVERYTHING IS *CHANGING!* THE ATTRACTIVE STRUCTURES ARE DEGENERATING INTO DECAYING, MOULDY, SLIME DRENCHED RUINS! THE INCREDIBLY HANDSOME PEOPLE...

ARE BEING ALTERED INTO *UNHOLY MONSTROSITIES!*

AND *DILEETH!* SHE'S B-BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A REPULSIVELY GHASTLY OLD CRONE!

COME CLOSER, LOVERBOY! KISS MY DECAYING LIPS BEFORE I *TASTE* HEE-HEE--YOUR *JUGULAR VEIN!*

I'LL ESCAPE THE DEVILISH TRAP OF THESE GRISLY ABOMINATIONS!

THAT DAZZLING CIRCLE OF BRILLIANCE DIRECTLY AHEAD IS SOME KIND OF DOORWAY BETWEEN TWO WORLDS!

HA, HA, I GOT AWAY! YOU VILE CREATURES WILL NEVER GET ME!

UNTIL...YOU SLEEP AGAIN! WE SHALL BE WAITING-- ACCURSED FOOL!

ALEX'S AWAKENING WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AN EQUALLY RAPID IMPRISONMENT!

CONFESS...YOUR NEIGHBORS HEARD YOUR WIFE YELLING SHE WOULDN'T ACCEPT YOUR DEMAND FOR DIVORCE!

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE!

BUT DAMNING!

BUT WITH THE ARRIVAL OF NIGHTFALL, ALEX'S COMPOSURE CRACKS...

THE DREAM DEMON'S THREAT...

GIVE ME **LOTS** OF COFFEE! I **MUST** STAY AWAKE!

SHADDUP! WE DON'T CATER TO MURDERERS!

ALEX'S CONTINUED CLAMOR EARNS HIM A SESSION WITH THE PRISON DOCTOR...

JUST GIVE ME SOME **PEP PILLS** SO I'LL STAY AWAKE!

I TELL YOU **DREAM DEMONS** ARE WAITING TO SEIZE ME IF I DOZE OFF!

YOU'RE PROBABLY PLANNING A SUICIDE ATTEMPT! REQUEST REFUSED!

SHORTLY, BACK IN HIS CELL...

HE'S BANGING HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL AGAIN-- TO KEEP HIM AWAKE, HE SAYS!

HE PROBABLY PLANS TO COP AN INSANITY PLEA!

SOON AT THE PRISON COMMISSARY...

TRYING TO JAB A FORK INTO YOUR WRIST, HUH? FROM NOW ON, YOU EAT WITH YOUR **FINGERS!**

I'M NOT ATTEMPTING SUICIDE! I'M GETTING DROWSIER, BUT I **DON'T DARE FALL ASLEEP!**

PRESENTLY LOCKED UP AGAIN...

THERE ARE INDESCRIBABLE HORRORS LURKING IN THE DREAM DIMENSION, YOU DAMNED SWINE!

I NEED *COFFEE* TO STAY AWAKE!

THEY'RE IGNORING ME! THE RATS!

NIMBO'S FRENZIED EFFORT TO REMAIN AWAKE IS A LOSING BATTLE! HIS BLOODSHOT, WEARIED EYELIDS KEEP DROOPING LOWER...AND LOWER YET...

RESISTANCE... DWINDLING--SLEEP --CREEPING IN-- WHILE *DEMONS WAIT...*

ABRUPTLY, ALEX IS AGAIN IN THE REALM OF THE ABOMINABLE NIGHTMARE...

TH-THE NAUSEATING EXCRESCENCES... SLITHERING YAMMERINGLY IN AT ME!

HE IS *OURS!*

LOVER BOY DOES NOT SEEM PLEASED TO SEE HIS ADORED...HEE-HEE-HEE...*DILEETH!*

INTO THE *POOL* WITH THE FOOL!

SONS OF CORRUPTION! YOU *TRICKED* ME INTO THIS FATE!

HUR HUR LISTEN TO THE WHINING MURDERER! A TYPICAL HOMO SAPIENS RETROGRADE!

INTO THE *ACID POOL* WITH THE CARRION!

ACID?

YUUUUURGH!

NEXT MORNING, IN THE CELL OF PRISONER ALEX NIMBO...

THIS IS NUTS! THERE'S NOTHING HERE BUT THAT *SKELETON!* IT'S GOT NO CLOTHING ...NO FLESH...

AND THAT EVIL, ACRID ODOR FROM THE SKELETON SMELLS EXACTLY LIKE...

ACID!

END

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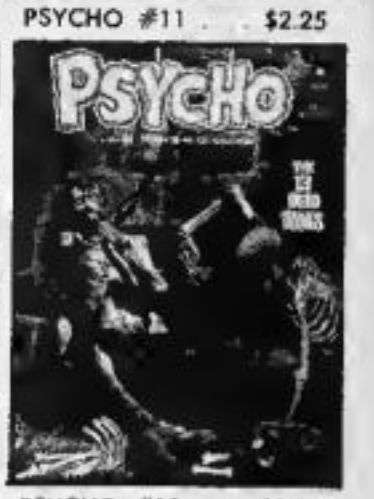

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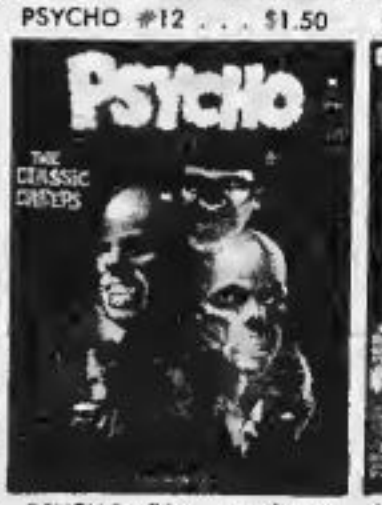

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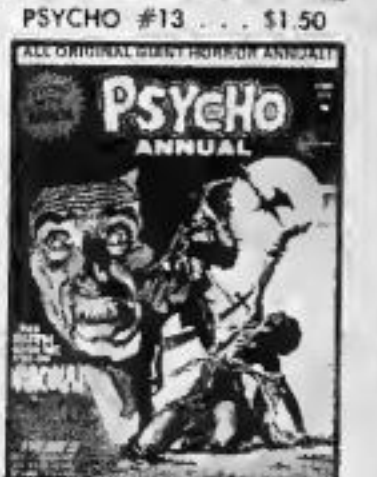

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YOUR CRUEL REIGN OF TERROR HAS *ENDED*, BARON RENPHREW! *JUSTICE* WILL SOON BE MET!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, KANE! AYE! HEED MY WORDS, BLAGGART, FOR *JUSTICE* WILL BE MET! AND IT IS *I* WHO WILL EXACT THIS JUSTICE FROM THE HIDES OF *YOU* AND YOUR GOD-FEARING *FOLLOWERS!*

FUJITAKE '71

THE STEEL GATE SLAMS SHUT AND THE TINKLING LAUGHTER OF THE KEYS FADES WITH THE RECEDING LIGHT!
YET, THERE IS NO FEAR OR REMORSE ON THE SILENT, MIRTHLESSLY SMILING COUNTENANCE OF THE INFAMOUS BARON! YOU SEE, HE HAS INSURED HIS SAFETY WITH AN UNEXPECTEDLY IRONIC MEANS OF...

ESCAPE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY DENNIS FUJITAKE

BLOOD MUCKER HAS HAD HIS DAY BUT I'LL SOON HAVE *MINE!*

THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO CAN BE HAD FOR *GOLD* AND IT IS WITH *THEM* I WILL *ESCAPE!* AND...

THERE! IT WILL BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE MY LACKEYS REACH ME! *GREED* IS *INDEED* A MOTIVATOR!

CHUNK

A METHODICAL CHUNK, CHUNK, CHUNK, REVERBERATES IN THE MUSTY DUNGEON THRU THE NIGHT UNTIL...

CHUNK CHUNK CHUNK

MMPH! DIRT... THEY'RE NEARLY THROUGH! HAH! *VENGEANCE* WILL SOON BE *MINE!*

HURRY, YOU FOOLS. *HURRY!* *HA, HA, HA, HA!*

ME, LORD? ME, LORD?

SHOOK

WHAT JUSTICE! THEY NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED! HA, HA, HA, CHORTLE! JUSTICE!

HA, HA, HA! MY REVENGE WILL BE TRULY SWEET JUSTICE! *MY* JUSTICE WILL BE MET!

HA, HA, HA, AND NOW... NO... GOD, *NO... URK!*

CHUNK

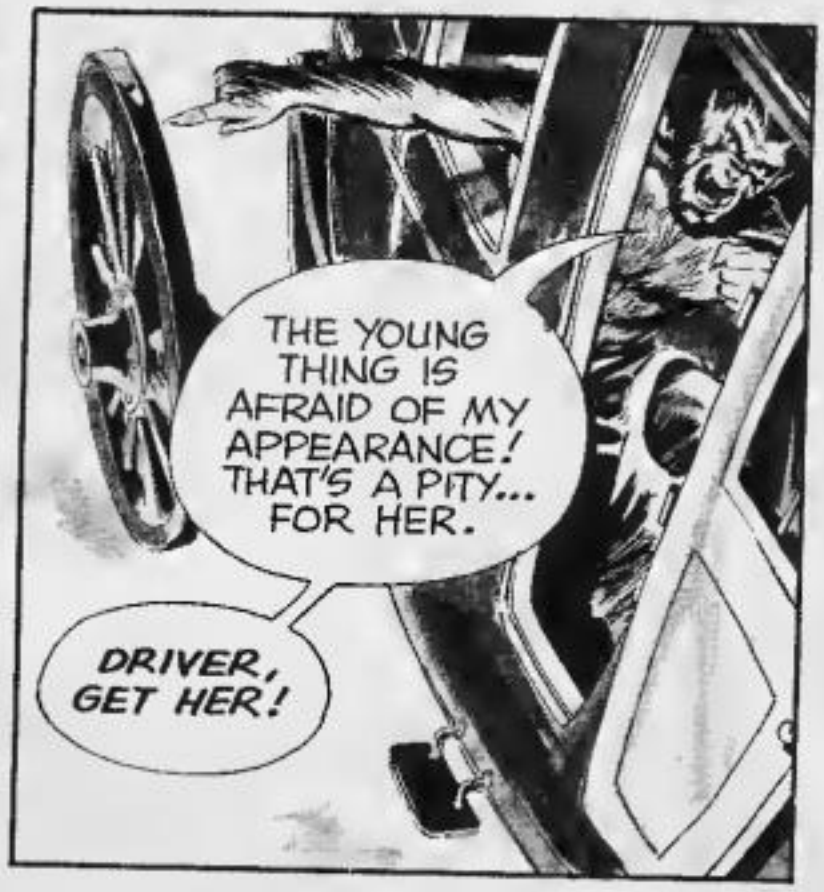
WHENCE STALKED THE WEREWOLF

WRITTEN BY LEN BROWN ILLUSTRATED BY CARLOS GARZON

THE SHRILL SCREAM OF AN ANGRY WOMAN PIERCED THE CHILLY LONDON AIR! SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST WAS THE LAW ON THE SEAMY SIDE OF THE CITY AND WITH THE THE WOMEN OF THE NIGHT WERE AT ODDS!

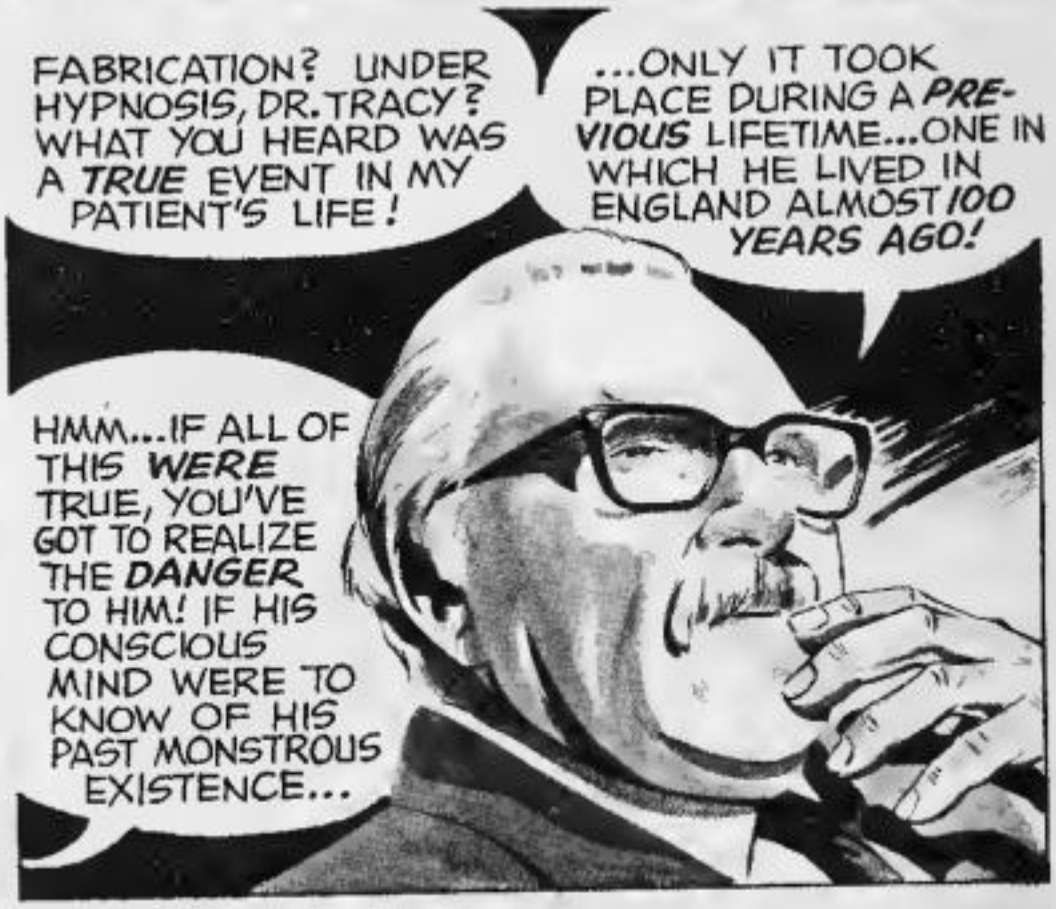
I'VE WARNED YOU BEFORE ABOUT COMING TO MY TERRITORY, DEARIE. NEXT TIME I SEE YOU DOWN HERE, IT'LL BE THE RIVER FOR YOU!
BE OFF WITH YOU NOW! THAT CARRIAGE I HEAR COMING PROBABLY BELONGS TO ONE OF ME CUSTOMERS! AND JUST KEEP A MIND ON WHAT I TOLD YOU, DO YOU HEAR ME?
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I BLOODY WELL HEARD YOU!
C. GARZON

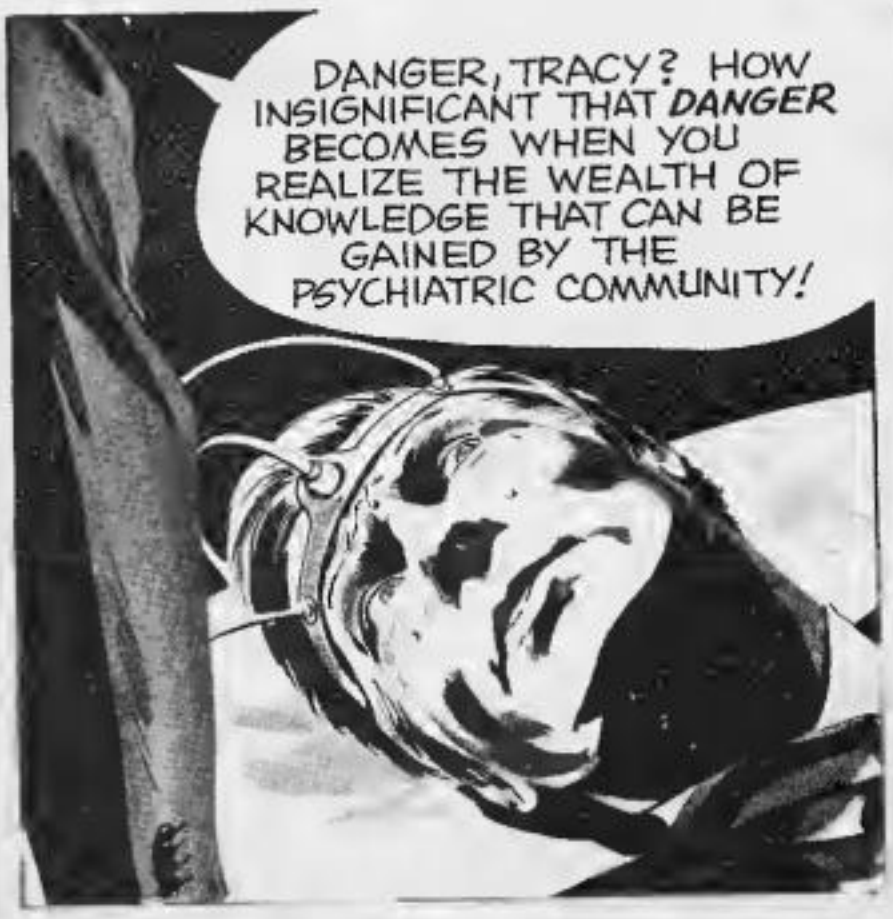
THERE'S NO RESPONSE FROM THE RIDER. NOT WISHING TO LOSE A POTENTIAL CUSTOMER, THE YOUNG WOMAN LEANS INTO THE CARRIAGE, DISPLAYING MORE THAN A CASUAL CHARM.
YOU'RE A SHY ONE, CAPTAIN. REALLY, THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF! I JUST... EEE-YAH!

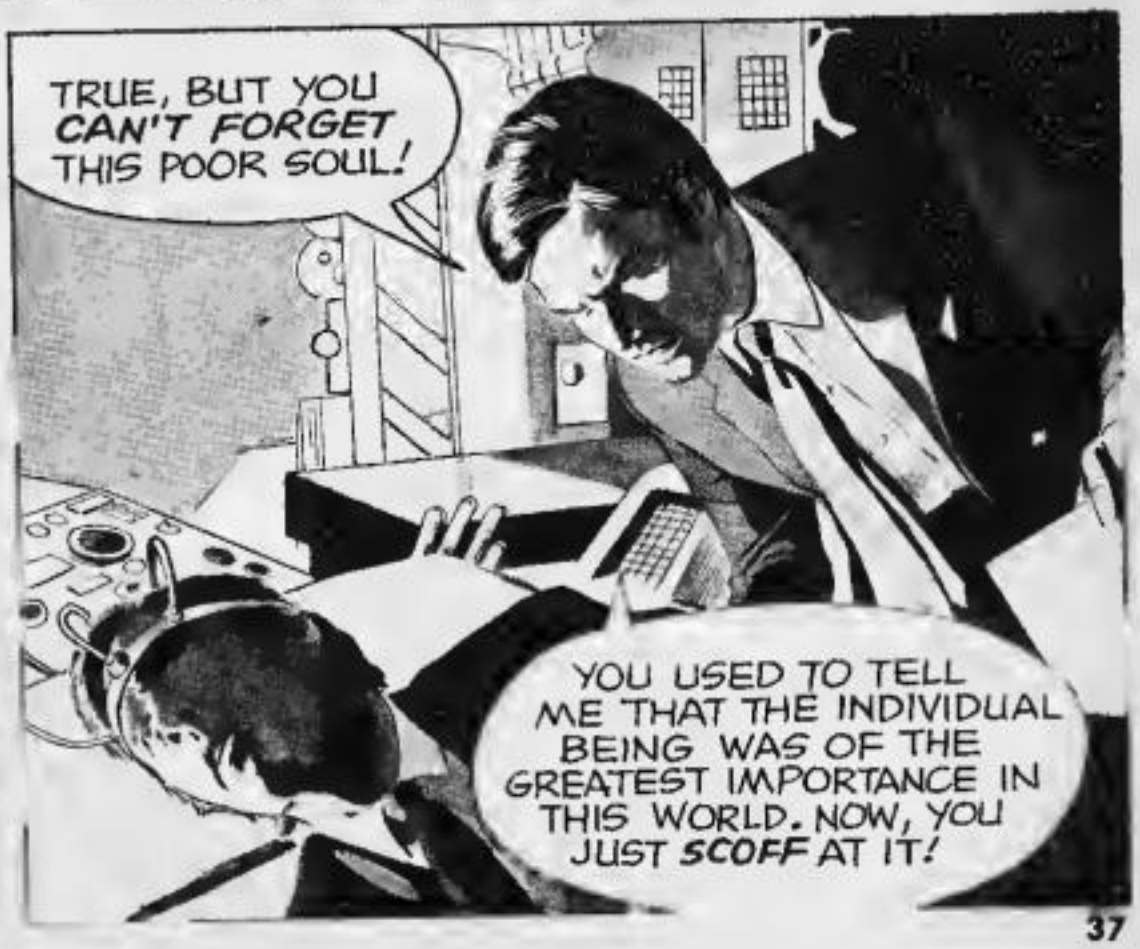


THE FRIGHTENED GIRL FLEES, HER PANIC DRIVES HER INTO A BLIND ALLEY!
NO! NO! PLEASE! HAVE MERCY, PLEASE! YAAA-AAHH!

1971! THE OFFICE OF DR. ALLAN BUND, WHOSE STARTLING NEW TECHNIQUES IN PSYCHO-THERAPY HAVE MADE HIM A MOST CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE.
AND I WATCHED TRIUMPHANTLY FROM INSIDE THE CARRIAGE, AS THE HORSE'S HOOFS MADE FAST WORK OF THE TRAMP!
INCREDIBLE STORY, DR. BUND! BUT SURELY IT'S SOME SORT OF FABRICATION!


FABRICATION? UNDER HYPNOSIS, DR. TRACY? WHAT YOU HEARD WAS A TRUE EVENT IN MY PATIENT'S LIFE!
...ONLY IT TOOK PLACE DURING A PREVIOUS LIFETIME...ONE IN WHICH HE LIVED IN ENGLAND ALMOST 100 YEARS AGO!
HMM...IF ALL OF THIS WERE TRUE, YOU'VE GOT TO REALIZE THE DANGER TO HIM! IF HIS CONSCIOUS MIND WERE TO KNOW OF HIS PAST MONSTROUS EXISTENCE...


DANGER, TRACY? HOW INSIGNIFICANT THAT DANGER BECOMES WHEN YOU REALIZE THE WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE THAT CAN BE GAINED BY THE PSYCHIATRIC COMMUNITY!


TRUE, BUT YOU CAN'T FORGET THIS POOR SOUL!
YOU USED TO TELL ME THAT THE INDIVIDUAL BEING WAS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE IN THIS WORLD. NOW, YOU JUST SCOFF AT IT!

TRACY, MODERN SCIENCE STANDS WHERE IT IS IN 1971 BECAUSE OF SACRIFICES. THERE IS STILL ANOTHER SOUL TO *SACRIFICE*... SO WHAT!

EXCUSE ME, TRACY, I MUST GET BACK TO MY WORK. THERE IS *SO MUCH* TO DO!

ALONE WITH HIS SUBJECT, THE DOCTOR TRANSPORTS THE PATIENT BACK TO THE 19TH CENTURY AND LONDON...

1880

9

8

76

...AND ONCE MORE THE SECRETS OF THE PAST ARE UNLOCKED!

VILLAGERS! THEY'VE TRACED THAT SLUT'S DEATH TO ME!

FIEND! OPEN THESE DOORS! WE'VE GOT A SCORE TO SETTLE UP!

EASY, JONATHAN! WE JUST CAME HERE TO TALK TO THE BLOKE. WE KNOW NOT FOR SURE THAT HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE *MURDERS!*...ONLY THE HEARSAY OF SOME *TRAMP!*

KAA-RASH!

THAT *DEVIL* IS OF NO MIND TO SHOW ANY HOSPITALITY!

FETCH SOME LARGE TIMBERS! WE'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH THESE DOORS, 'FORE HE DOES US *IN!*

THE ATTACK BY THE CREATURE THROWS THE CITIZENS INTO A RAGE AND INCREASES THEIR DETERMINATION.

HURRY, MAN, FORE HE TRIES SOME NEW *TRICKS!*

BOOM

WE'LL *TEAR* DOWN THIS PLACE, BUT WE'LL GET HIM!

AYE, AND SEND HIS SOUL STRAIGHT TO *HELL!*

AS THE PATIENT RELATES HIS AGONIZING STORY, RELIVING THE NIGHTMARE STARTLES HIM OUT OF HIS TRANCE.

NO--NO!

EASY! A LITTLE OF *THIS* SHOULD RELAX YOU!

I--I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN GO **ON,** DOCTOR. B--BEEN HAVING DREAMS... *TERRIBLE DREAMS!*

NONSENSE! YOU'VE BEEN DOING SPLENDID! LIE STILL... AND RELAX... *RELAX...*

THE UNWILLING SUBJECT STARTS TO FALL BACK INTO A RESTLESS SLEEP WHEN...

BUND, YOU MUST STOP THIS *MAD-NESS!*

I AM CONDUCTING A HIGHLY SENSITIVE EXPERIMENT. YOU MUST LEAVE AT ONCE!

I HAVE NO CHOICE... BUT, I'LL BE BACK AND SEE TO IT THAT THIS IS *STOPPED...*

THAT MEDDLING *FOOL!* I'LL HAVE TO COMPLETE MY WORK EVEN FASTER NOW!

HE STANDS TO RUIN EVERY-THING!

GO BACK IN TIME! WATCH FOR YOUR CASTLE...IT HAS BEEN INVADED BY AN *ANGRY* MOB!...TELL ME!

THOUGH HE TRIES TO RESIST THE SUGGESTION, THE SUBJECT LOSES HIS FIGHT AND ONCE MORE LOOKS BACK UPON HIS TORTURED PAST.

HE *KILLED* MY POOR DAUGHTER! SHE WAS AN ANGEL!

AYE, MA'AM! OLD BLAKE WILL FIX IT. THERE'S A BULLET OF *SILVER* IN THIS RIFLE. THAT'S THE ONLY THING WHICH WILL *STOP* THE LIKES OF *HIM!*

TAKE GOOD AIM, BLAKE! YOU'LL NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE, SO YOUR SHOT MUST BE *TRUE!*

AYE! IF ONLY THE *DEVIL* WOULD HOLD STILL! AH, I THINK *NOW...*

THE SOUND OF AN EXPLODING SHELL ECHOES THROUGH THE COLD CASTLE AND...

BANG!

AND THEN...

YOU'VE GOT *HIM!* GOOD WORK, MAN!

MAY HIS SOUL *ROT* IN *HELL...* FOR HIS FOUL DEEDS HERE ON EARTH!

YEE-OOWWHO

MY GOD! ARE YOU ALL *RIGHT?* OH, MY GOD!

I'LL FEEL *FOOLISH* IF IT'S A FALSE ALARM, OFFICER! BUT DR. BUND HASN'T ANSWERED HIS TELEPHONE FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS!

WELL, HE COULD HAVE LEFT TOWN!

NO, NOT HIM. HE WAS TOO *INVOLVED* IN A PROJECT TO GO AT THIS TIME!

PSYCHO

THAT *SCRATCHING* SOUND...IT SOUNDS LIKE AN *ANIMAL!* WHAT DO YOU THINK IT *IS?*

I'M ONLY *AFRAID* TO GUESS!

THE TWO MEN ENTER DR. BUND'S PRIVATE OFFICE, UNPREPARED FOR THE SCENE OF HORROR THAT MEETS THEIR EYES...

GOOD LORD!

;*GULP*;...BUND'S *EXPERIMENTS!*...I WARNED HIM!...HE PRESSED ON AND ON AND LOOK...LOOK WHAT HE HAS *DONE*... AND LOOK AT THAT POOR *MAD FOOL!*

AND THEN...

MAD! OH, NO, I'M NOT MAD, MY FRIENDS! JUST A LITTLE ***HUNGRY!***

The END

WRITTEN BY DOUG MOENCH ILLUSTRATED BY DOUG WILDEY

VITAL INFORMATION SECURED, UNDERCOVER AGENT GEORGE MARSH STALKED DOWN THE RAIN-SLICK PAVEMENTS OF THE CITY JUNGLE, INTENT ON COMPLETING THE LAST STEP OF HIS ASSIGNMENT...

NOW THAT I KNOW A LARGE SHIPMENT OF DANGEROUS NARCOTICS IS DUE TO ARRIVE TOMORROW, THE ONLY PIECE REMAINING TO THE PUZZLE IS TO FIND OUT ***WHERE***...AND MY ANONYMOUS CONFIDANT SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL ME ***THAT!***

BAR

AS MARSH BEGAN TO CROSS THE WET STREET, A PARKED CAR OMINOUSLY FLASHED ON ITS HEADLIGHTS--UNNOTICED BY THE PREOCCUPIED AGENT...

I TOLD HIM TO MEET ME ABOUT THREE BLOCKS AWAY! STILL GOT FIFTEEN MINUTES--PLENTY OF TIME. I JUST HOPE HE ***SHOWS UP*** SO THIS DOPE RING ***CAN BE SMASHED*** ONCE AND FOR ALL!

THE CAR ROARED TO METALLIC LIFE, AND LURCHED FROM THE CURB...

VVRRROOWW!

WHUMP!

...STRAIGHT FOR THE HUMAN TARGET PINPOINTED BY THE GLARING BEAMS OF ITS HEADLIGHTS!

GOOD LORD! THAT CAR...!

WITH BRUTAL, BONE-JARRING FORCE, THE UNDERCOVER AGENT ABSORBED THE FULL IMPACT OF A HEAD-ON COLLISION WITH THE ONRUSHING METAL JUGGERNAUT.

...AND CRUMPLED TO THE RAIN-SWEPT PAVEMENT AS THE CAR SPED OFF INTO THE ENVELOPING BLACKNESS OF NIGHT.

END OF CHAPTER THREE, EH, MR. DENNING? WELL, I LIKE IT! WHY NOT FINISH IT AND IF THE REST IS AS GOOD AS THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS, I THINK WE CAN USE IT--FLAT RATE OF THREE THOUSAND PLUS STANDARD ROYALTIES. VERY VIVID STUFF SO FAR, MR. DENNING! AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH WORDS--I GUESS IT'S THE...

POWER of the PEN!

THANK YOU, MR. CROWLEY! GLAD YOU LIKED IT. I'LL START WORK ON THE REST TOMORROW-- SHOULD BE DONE IN THREE OR FOUR MONTHS, FOLLOWING THE OUTLINE I GAVE YOU ALONG WITH THOSE THREE-SAMPLE CHAPTERS!

CROWLEY ...ISHER

TERRIFIC! IF ONLY IT WAS THIS EASY TO SELL A BOOK EVERY TIME! I'M GOING TO GO STRAIGHT HOME AND PHONE GEORGE ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS!

THAT'LL BE FINE! YOU'LL BE RECEIVING AN ADVANCE IN THE MAIL NEXT WEEK OR SO!

THANK YOU, SIR. GOOD AFTERNOON.

A HECTIC CAB RIDE THROUGH THE CITY'S LATE AFTERNOON TRAFFIC SNARL FINALLY BRINGS JEFF DENNING TO HIS MODEST APARTMENT...

WAIT'LL GEORGE HEARS I USED HIS NAME FOR THE MAIN CHARACTER IN A CRIME NOVEL WHICH HAS JUST BEEN SOLD!

I THINK HALF THE FUN OF WRITING IS INJECTING ALL THE "IN" JOKES AND USING FRIENDS AS CHARACTERS IN BIZARRE SITUATIONS!

BRING! BRING!

HMMM... GUESS GEORGE ISN'T HOME. IT'S ODD THAT HE ISN'T--HIS WIFE USUALLY *HAS* DINNER PREPARED BY THIS TIME. OH WELL, I THINK I'LL GET TO WORK ON THE NEXT CHAPTER...

LET'S SEE...CHAPTER FOUR--"DEATH'S DOORWAY. GEORGE MARSH GRADUALLY AWOKE THROUGH A MISTY HAZE OF DULLED PAIN TO FIND HIMSELF HELPLESSLY CONFINED TO A HOSPITAL BED."

CLACK! ACK! CLACK!

"ELUSIVE IMAGES DANCED BEFORE HIS UNFOCUSED VISION--THE IMAGES OF HIS WIFE AND TWO GRIM DOCTORS."

HE'S IN BAD SHAPE, MRS. MARSH. I'M AFRAID I MUST BE FRANK--HE MAY NOT PULL THROUGH!

H-HE CAN'T...D-DIE! ;SOB; YOU MUST ***DO*** SOMETHING! SOMETHING TO MAKE HIM ***LIVE***...

WE'VE DONE ALL WE CAN, MRS. MARSH. IT'S NOT UP TO US ANY MORE.

THROUGH THE CRIPPLING PAIN, MARSH THOUGHT DOGGEDLY OF ONLY ONE THING...

I'M SWORN TO SECRECY! IF ONLY I COULD TELL THEM--TELL THEM I'M AN UNDERCOVER AGENT! IF I DIE, MY ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT WILL FAIL! IT'S BEING JEOPARDIZED FURTHER WITH EVERY MOMENT I REMAIN IN THIS BED...

OH, GEORGE, YOU CAN'T ***DIE!*** Y-YOU JUST CAN'T...

GUESS I'LL TRY TO GET GEORGE AGAIN--TELL HIM HE'S NEXT TO DEATH IN MY NOVEL! HA, HA! IT'S REALLY HARD TO IMAGINE GEORGE BEING AN ***UNDERCOVER AGENT,*** THOUGH!

BRI BRING!

H-HELLO? OH, HELLO, JEFF. NO, GEORGE ISN'T HERE--;SOB;--JEFF, SOMETHING ***TERRIBLE*** HAS HAPPENED! GEORGE WAS STRUCK BY A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER LAST NIGHT! I JUST GOT BACK FROM THE HOSPITAL--T-THEY DON'T THINK HE'LL LIVE!

YOU SAY HE'S DOWN AT MARTHA WASHINGTON HOSPITAL? I'LL GET RIGHT DOWN THERE, BONNIE! YOU JUST SIT TIGHT! I'M SURE EVERYTHING WILL TURN OUT OKAY.

HASTILY, THE DISTRAUGHT WRITER TAXIS TC THE HOSPITAL...

THIS IS ***INCREDIBLE!*** GEORGE MARSH, MY FRIEND, STRUCK DOWN BY A CAR ON THE SAME NIGHT I WROTE ABOUT GEORGE MARSH, THE CHARACTER IN MY STORY, BEING HIT! IT'S ALMOST ***TOO MUCH*** TO BE ***COINCIDENCE!***

AFTER SECURING PERMISSION FROM THE DOCTORS TO SEE HIS STRICKEN FRIEND, JEFF BENNING STANDS AT THE BEDSIDE, WITNESS TO AN UNCANNY CONFESSION...

J-JEFF! THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE! I-I MUST T-TELL YOU SOMETHING BEFORE I GO...THEY SAY I'M GONNA DIE--AND IF I DO, A DANGEROUS NARCOTICS RING WILL CONTINUE TO THRIVE OFF THE MONEY OF DESPERATELY HOPELESS PEOPLE!

WHAT??! GEORGE, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? ARE YOU DELIROUS?

NO, JEFF! I KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING! I-I'M AN UNDERCOVER AGENT... YOU'VE GOT TO CONTACT MY SUPERIORS--HAVE THEM COME HERE--OR MY DEATH WILL BE IN VAIN!

THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE! EVERYTHING I'VE WRITTEN ABOUT MY CHARACTER WITH GEORGE'S NAME HAS ACTUALLY HAPPENED TO GEORGE! GOTTA GET HOME FAST!

ALL RIGHT, GEORGE, I'LL DO IT. DON'T YOU WORRY.

THE LIFE OF HIS BEST FRIEND HANGING IN THE BALANCE, JEFF DENNING RETURNS TO HIS DEPARTMENT AND THE ONLY APPARENT MEANS OF SALVATION FOR GEORGE MARSH...

IF MY WRITING SOMEHOW GOT GEORGE INTO THIS FIX, PERHAPS IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET HIM OUT! EVEN THOUGH I DON'T SEE HOW IT CAN POSSIBLY WORK, I'VE GOT TO TRY IT!

FEVERISHLY, THE FRANTIC WRITER RESUMES HIS NOVEL WITH AN EFFORT NEVER BEFORE EXPENDED ON ANY OF HIS OTHER WORKS...

I LEFT OFF WITH THE SCENE IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM...SO, HERE GOES--AND IT'D BETTER WORK! WHO CAN SAY WHAT IT WAS? THE SHEER DETERMINATION OF THE TOUGH AGENT --THE STUBBORN WILL TO LIVE--OR A MIRACLE? BUT, WHATEVER, GEORGE MARSH FELT THE ROILING MAELSTROM OF CONFUSION LIFT FROM HIS MIND AS A FOG ROLLS OFF THE OCEAN...

...HIS PAIN SUBSIDED, AND HE KNEW HE WOULD ***LIVE...***

THAT SHOULD DO IT--I HOPE! I STILL CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO BELIEVE THAT ALL THIS IS REALLY ***...THE PHONE!***

NOW TO GET DOWN TO THE HOSPITAL AND SEE IF THAT WORKED ALSO!

JEFF? THIS IS BONNIE! THE HOSPITAL JUST PHONED WITH THE MOST ***WONDERFUL*** NEWS! THE DOCTORS CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW OR WHY, BUT GEORGE IS GOING TO ***LIVE!***

OH BONNIE, WHAT MARVELOUS ***UNEXPECTED*** NEWS! I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!

NOW, IF MY HUNCH IS RIGHT, I CAN END THIS WHOLE BUSINESS WITH ONE SENTENCE! LET'S SEE...HOWEVER, THE INJURIES SUSTAINED IN MARSH'S NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT RESULTED IN A CASE OF PARTIAL AMNESIA, PREVENTING HIM FROM REMEMBERING ANYTHING ABOUT HIS ROLE AS AN UNDERCOVER AGENT!

WELL, GEORGE, GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE FEELING BETTER! I... UH...***CONTACTED*** THEM AS YOU ASKED ME TO.

CONTACTED THEM? CONTACTED ***WHO***, JEFF? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

GOOD! HE DOESN'T REMEMBER A THING ABOUT HIS "OTHER" LIFE! NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS CHANGE THE NAME OF MY CHARACTER TO A FICTITIOUS ONE AND I CAN FINISH THE BOOK!

UH, OUR FRIENDS, GEORGE! YOU ASKED ME TO CONTACT OUR FRIENDS AND TELL THEM ABOUT YOUR ACCIDENT!

OH, I DID? MUST'VE BEEN DELIRIOUS, JEFF. I DON'T SEEM TO REMEMBER--BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER! THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE DOCTORS SAY I CAN LEAVE TOMORROW!

AS A RELIEVED JEFF DENNING RETURNS TO HIS APARTMENT...

WELL, I SURE AM GLAD THAT'S OVER WITH! THE ONLY WAY I CAN FIGURE IT IS THAT THIS WHOLE BUSINESS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE TYPEWRITER!

...AND JUST SO NOTHING ELSE LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENS AGAIN--

SPALANGG!

KARASHHH!

THAT OUGHT TO DO IT! THIS IS ONE TYPEWRITER THAT'LL NEVER WORK AGAIN!

GOOD LORD! I JUST REMEMBERED A FANTASY STORY I WROTE ABOUT A MONTH AGO CALLED "THE FAIREST IN THEM ALL" IN WHICH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL IS IMPRISONED IN A MIRROR THROUGHOUT ETERNITY!

AND I NAMED MY CHARACTER AFTER *SANDY PRESTON!* MY GOD! I HAVEN'T SEEN SANDY FOR A *MONTH*--SINCE I *WROTE* THE STORY! SHE MUST BE TRAPPED IN A MIRROR SOMEWHERE! AND I'VE JUST OBLITERATED THE TYPEWRITER BEYOND REPAIR--THE ONLY MEANS OF REVERSING HER FATE!

The Fairest of Them All—

DAWNING REALIZATION SERVES TO FIRE THE WRITER INTO IMMEDIATE ACTION, AND ADDS HASTY IMPETUS TO HIS RESOLVE...

MUST GET OVER TO SANDY'S APARTMENT! NO TIME TO LOSE!

REACHING THE GIRL'S EAST SIDE APARTMENT, DENNING FINDS...

NO ANSWER! JUST AS I THOUGHT! WELL, THERE'S ONLY ONE TO *DO*--

3C

KHU-NOCK

A MONTH OF ACCUMULATED DUST COATS THE APARTMENT WITH STALE MUSTINESS, AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH COLDLY ATTESTS TO THE UTTER DESERTION OF THE PLACE...

SANDY? *SANDY!* ARE YOU HERE, SANDY?

...A DESERTION WHICH EXTENDS TO EVERY CORNER OF THE APARTMENT ... SAVE *ONE!*

THAT *MIRROR!* NO, IT CAN'T BE! BUT...BUT IT'S *TRUE!* SANDY IS...

...IMPRISONED IN THIS MIRROR! GOOD LORD! WHY DID I SMASH THAT TYPEWRITER BEYOND REPAIR?!

EVEN AS THE SHOCKED WRITER LAMENTS HIS EARLIER ACTION, A STRANGE INEXPLICABLE FORCE SEIZES HIM AND DRAWS HIM INEXORABLY, TOWARDS THE POSSESSIVE MIRROR...

W-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I'M BEING FORCED TO MOVE *TOWARDS THE MIRROR*--CAN'T CONTROL MYSELF ...CAN'T *STOP!*

SEEMINGLY WITH SENTIMENTAL MALICE, THE MYSTERIOUS MAGNETIC POWER SUCKS HIM CLOSER AND STILL CLOSER ...UNTIL THE SUPERNATURAL LOOKING GLASS BEGINS TO *ENVELOPE* HIM...

OH, NO! I FORGOT ABOUT THE *ENDING* TO THAT STORY I WROTE! THE ENDING THAT SAYS...

... anyone who should attempt to rescue the cursed girl shall join her similarly in her fate of eternal imprisonment within the mirror.

The End

AND ELSEWHERE, FIVE MONTHS LATER...

WHERE IS THAT DENNING? HE'S A MONTH **OVERDUE** ALREADY! WHY CAN'T I EVER FIND A WRITER WHO ISN'T TOO BUSY *PARTYING* ALL THE TIME TO MEET A *DEADLINE!*

End

WRITTEN BY ALAN HEWETSON ILLUSTRATED BY TOM SUTTON

DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH IS THE FIENDISH INFERNAL ABYSS KNOWN AS... ***HELL!*** ETERNALLY MAN HAS LIVED IN FEAR OF DAMNATION...THAT HIS SOUL MAY BE CAST INTO EVERLASTING TORMENT AND ODIOUS PANDEMONIUM! OUR TALE TAKES YOU ON A PERSONALLY GUIDED TOUR OF GROTTO OF ***HELL*** ITSELF...FROM WHICH NONE HAVE EVER RETURNED... SAVE FOR ONE...THE--

HAG OF THE BLOOD BASKET!

FRANCE, THE YEAR 1793...IN THE MIDST OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION...ONE OF THE GAUDIEST BLOODBATHS IN HISTORY. A REVOLUTION OF THE "PEOPLE" WHERE PREJUDICE HAS ITS REVENGE IN KIND...WHERE MEN, WOMEN AND EVEN CHILDREN OF NOBLE BIRTH, ARE DRAGGED IN RICKETY, LUMBERING CARTS AFTER A MOCK TRIAL, TO THEIR DEATHS AT THE BLACK HAND OF THE MERCILESS...***GUILLOTINE!***

THE ***GUILLOTINE***...GLEAMING IN THE BLOOD DRENCHED STREETS OF PARIS, CUTS THE WRITHING HEADS OF ITS OFT-INNOCENT VICTIMS. MINDLESS, HEADLESS BUT ONLY FOR A FEW SECONDS... THEN THE GHASTLY DISFIGURED HEADS ROLL INTO A CRIMSON RECEPTACLE...***THE BLOODY HEAD-BASKET!***

IN THAT TIME OF PERSONAL VENDETTA... WHEN MEN USED THE REVOLUTION TO KILL THEIR PERSONAL ENEMIES, STARTS OUR TALE...AN OLD WOMAN IS FALSELY ACCUSED OF BEING A ROYALIST... IN REALITY SHE WAS BUT A SIMPLE PEASANT... ***THE WOMAN WHO HELD THE BLOOD BASKET!***

WHY?

WHY AM I HERE IN COURT? I AM AN ***OLD WOMAN***... I HAVE DONE ***NOTHING*** ...I PLAY MY PART IN THE ***REVOLUTION*** WELL ...TELL ME ***WHY?***

REVOLTING OLD ***HAG***...YOUR PRESENCE IS AN INSULT!

THIS COURT HAS ***NO*** PITY ON YOU OR YOUR VILE ***KIND!***

KIND? ...KIND OF ***WHAT?***

WHY DO YOU INSULT ***ME?***

WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE ***WRONG?***

SILENCE HAG! DO NOT AFFRONT JUSTICE AGAIN WITH YOUR VILE ***MOUTH***...YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED BY BROTHER BENET OF CONSORTING WITH THE ACCURSED ARISTOCRACY... SAY YOUR ***DEFENSE!***

...AND MAKE IT ***BRIEF!***

THAT'S ***INSANITY!*** BROTHER BENET HAS ***TRUMPED UP*** HIS CHARGE... MERELY TO GET ***RID*** OF ME!

HE OWES ME MUCH ***MONEY***... IF I'M DEAD HE WON'T HAVE TO ***PAY*** ME... ***I SWEAR IT!***

SO YOU HAVE NOTHING OF VALUE TO SAY... BUT FALSE AND CRUEL ACCUSATIONS AGAINST OUR GOOD CITIZENS!
THE VERDICT... GUILTY OF TREASON YOU OLD TOAD HAG. I SENTENCE YOU TO DEATH! MAY THE LORD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR WRETCHED SOUL WOMAN!

CERTAINLY NO MERCY FROM A COURT WITH POWER DEVOID OF SANITY... AND SHE IS CONDEMNED TO BE TAKEN THE FOLLOWING DAY TO THE WAITING CLUTCHES OF THE GUILLOTINE... MERCILESS AND CRUEL, UNHEARING AND UNCARING... A HIDEOUS LAMPOONER OF JUSTICE!

THE EXECUTIONER STANDS BEFORE THE CROWDS OF JEERING PEASANTS, HAND GRASPING TAUGHT THE ROPE THAT HOLDS READY THE BLADE... THE CONQUERING STEEL SHAFT THAT SEVERS ANY MAN'S LIFE!

THE CROWDS LEAR AT THE CONVICTED WHO LUMBER TO THE PLATFORM FROM BLOOD-DRENCHED CARTS... CRY SHOUTS OF INSULT AND SING SONGS OF FREEDOM... DELIRIOUS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE MACABRE SLAUGHTER THAT AWAITS THEM!

FATE GLEAMS OMINOUSLY ABOVE AS THE OLD TOAD HAG WHIMPERS IN DESPAIR... LEGS GROW WEAK... HER EYES-- LONG SOAKED WITH TEARS OF AGONY--ROLL, HAGGARD IN THEIR SOCKETS! AS SHE NOW FACES THE ETERNITY OF DAMNATION!

THE BLADE DROPS SUDDENLY... CUTTING THE EAR-PIERCING SCREAMS OF THE WRETCHED OLD WOMAN SPITTING HORRIBLE OBSCENITIES AT THOSE JEERING MANY WHO CONDEMNED HER TO DEATH! IN BUT A MOMENT THE UNCANNY FRENZY IS OVER. THE HEAD ROLLS, EYES POPPING FROM THEIR SOCKETS...AND THE GUTTER WELCOMES THE GROTESQUE CADAVER WITH BLOOD-SODDEN COBBLESTONES! THE TOAD HAG LIES DEAD AND DECAPITATED! THE CROWD IS HUSHED IN A MOMENT OF PRE-CLIMACTIC REFLECTION...

WHAT UNHEAVENLY JOKE IS THIS?

BUT DEATH COMES NOT EASILY. HER EYES REMAIN OPEN EVEN AS SHE LIES HELPLESS, IN PASSIVE AGONY AS THE FEET OF HER MURDERERS PASS HER BY...

SHE WATCHES IN TORTURE AS HER NOW LIMP AND LIFELESS FORM IS TOSSED LIKE GARBAGE FROM THE THRONE OF DEATH...AND WONDERS... PONDERS ***WHY*** THERE IS NOT THE NOTHINGNESS OF DEATH SHE EXPECTED...BUT A ***LIFE*** AFTER DEATH ...THAT PERMITS HER TO SEE, TO HEAR, TO WONDER!

MISERY AND SHOCK MUDDLE TOGETHER IN THE TOAD HAG'S MIND...THE BODY (THAT WAS ONCE HERS) SHUDDERS AND GROPES FORWARD SEARCHING...SEARCHING FOR A HEAD. A MIND THAT THINKS, EYES THAT CAN SEE! THE HANDS FIND THEIR TARGET...AND PULL THE TEAR-PULSING HEAD BACK ...BACK TO THE SHOULDERS WHERE IT RIVETS ITSELF MIRACULOUSLY...AND THE MESS THAT WAS LIVING DEATH NOW BECOMES...***AS ONE IN FORM...AND IN LIFE!***

WHAT GRIM IMPOSSIBILITY IS ***THIS***... I AM ALIVE YET NO ONE SEES ME...NO ONE PAYS ANY ***ATTENTION*** THEY LOOK TO THE GUILLOTINE FOR THE NEXT ***DEATH!***

IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL ***AFTERLIFE?*** I FEEL NO ***PAIN***--NO ***AGONY***--EXCEPT IN MY ***MIND!***

AND SOON YOU *SHALL* KNOW WRETCHED OLD HAG, AS YOU BEGIN YOUR *DESCENT*... YOU *SINK* INTO THE VERY *GROUND* ITSELF. YOU *GRASP* FOR SUPPORT CLUTCHING NOTHING BUT *AIR*...MEANINGLESS *AIR*... AND STILL YOU *SINK*...DOWN...DOWN...INTO THE VERY *BOWELS* OF THE EARTH!

THE EARTH *WELCOMES* YOU... CUSHIONS YOUR *DESCENT* AND CARESSES YOUR DECAYING BODY IN *MOCKERY*. YOU ARE CHOKING...AND SUFFER...AND CLUTCH YOUR THROAT *PLEADING* FOR *AIR*...FOR YOU CANNOT BREATHE...AND YET YOU CANNOT DIE!

AND WHERE THE GROUND-- AND EARTH *END*...DEEP WITHIN THE WORLD'S VERY *CORE*... YOU FALL THROUGH THE NOTHINGNESS THAT SURROUNDS YOU. GREAT MONSTROUS *BATS* HOVER ABOUT AND, RUDELY AWAKENED FROM THEIR SLEEP OF AGES, CRASH BLINDLY ABOUT YOUR HELPLESS FORM NOW BATTERED AND BRUISED...

TARTARUS WELCOMES YOU...MADAM! I TRUST YOUR TRIP HAS BEEN AS UNCOMFORTABLE AS WE *INTENDED* IT BE! I AM *VOGT*... EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO HIS MAJESTY SATHANAS! THIS MADAME ...AS YOU MAY HAVE PRESUMED... IS *HELL!*

AND WHEN YOU *DO* STOP FALLING...YOU ARE SURROUNDED BY *NOTHING!* YOU SCREAM...AND NO ONE HEARS YOU...SAVE THE INCREDIBLE NIGHTBIRDS OF DEATH WHO STIFLE THE VERY AIR YOU NOW BREATHE...UNTIL THERE APPEARS BEFORE YOU A VILE HUNCHED DWARF...CURIOUS AND OBSCENE...WHO SILENCES THE LOUD CLATTERING OF WINGS AND YOUR CRIES... AND YOU LISTEN!

HELL! IS IT NOT ENOUGH THAT I BE UNJUSTLY MURDERED? MUST I SUFFER THE INDIGNITIES OF HELL THOUGH I BE-- INNOCENT!

OH COME NOW, MADAM! ALL SOULS WHO COME HERE RANT ABOUT THEIR INNOCENCE...

...NO ONE IS INNOCENT MADAM...LEAST OF ALL YOU!

CEASE THIS CHILDISH SQUABBLE! COME TO GRIPS! YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN COMPLETE...SO DON'T START COMPLAINING TO ME NOW... I'M ONLY AN ASSISTANT!

THAT DOORWAY, MADAM...LEADS TO THE GROTTO OF TARTARUS...WHICH YOU MAY KNOW AS THE VALLEY OF DEATH... WITHIN... MANY AWAIT YOU EAGERLY SO NOW GO ...OR IT'LL BE ALL THE HARDER FOR YOU!

NO...I'LL NOT GO ANYWHERE TILL I'VE HAD A FAIR HEARING...

...NOT UNTIL I SEE SATAN HIMSELF...WHAT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME...I'M BEING DRAGGED BY UNSEEN HANDS! I CAN'T FIGHT! WHAT INSANITY IS THIS?

YOU THINK YOU CAN CHEAT ME OF JUSTICE SO SIMPLY... YOU THINK YOU CAN TREAT ME LIKE SO MUCH DIRT...NO, NEVER!

BEING DRAGGED... INTO BEDLAM...CAN THIS REALLY BE HAPPENING OR IS IT THAT I AM REALLY INSANE? THAT ALL THIS IS IN MY HEAD!

WAIT!!

LIGHT... LIGHT AHEAD... IT CAN ONLY MEAN...

THE GROTTO OF HELL! GROTESQUE--HORRID--UNCANNY BEYOND MORTAL IMAGINATION...WHERE THE DEAD DWELL IN AN ETERNITY OF TORTURE AND ANGUISH... WHERE FREEDOM IS BANISHED...WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL IS BUT LITERALLY A NUMBER ON A CAGE... WHERE *SATAN* RULES WITH AN IRON FIST!

THE GROTTO OF HELL! WHERE TIME STANDS STILL AND YET REACHES OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS...INTO THE DEEP AND MISTY AGES OF YESTERDAY...AND FAR INTO THE WAR RIDDEN UNKNOWNS OF TOMORROW! IT IS UNBEARABLE FOR A WOMAN SO OLD, SO FRAIL...SHE FEELS AGONY IN THE LIFELESS HEART IN THE LIFELESS SPIRITUAL BODY! YET SHE CAN SAY NOTHING...*DO* NOTHING HERE...LESS IT BE SANCTIONED BY THE DEVIL HIMSELF!

GREAT BLACK BUILDINGS... *HORRIBLE* TO BEHOLD! THEY ARE OUT OF THIS *WORLD* LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A BIZARRE FUTURE!
BUT *WAIT*...THERE ARE NO PEOPLE...*NO PEOPLE!* WHERE CAN THEY BE? IS THIS NOT A *CITY*...OR IS IT EXACTLY WHAT IT APPEARS TO BE...SOME KIND OF INCREDIBLE *CRYPT OF THE FORGOTTEN DEAD!*

13
MADAM, YOUR QUARTERS AWAIT YOU, IF YOU WILL FOLLOW ME!
I'LL FOLLOW YOU *NOWHERE* UNTIL I FIND OUT MORE ...UNTIL I HAVE AN *EXPLANATION!* WHAT IS THIS PLACE? ...WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE...*TELL ME*...PLEASE *TELL ME!*

IN THE GRIME AND CAKED DUST OF HELL ITSELF SATAN HIMSELF IS UNSEEN...YET HE IS ALWAYS PRESENT...ALWAYS ON THE LIPS OF EVERY DESPERATE SOUL WHO INHABITS THIS ISLE OF DAMNATION! HE IS SERVED BY MANY ASSISTANTS WHO, CONTEMPTABLE EVEN TO THEIR OWN KIND *ARE* HIDEOUSLY DEFORMED DEVILISH ASSISTANTS WHO HAVE SWORN THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HATE...TERROR... DESPOTISM AND FEAR. THE TOAD HAG HAS ALREADY MET ONE SUCH GAUNT EXCUSE FOR HUMANITY...HE WHO IS CALLED... *VOGT!*...NOW SHE MEETS ANOTHER... THE HAGGARD *DRAKKOS!*

YOU *WILL* COME WITH ME WHETHER YOU *WISH* TO OR NOT!

THIS IS A SPIRITUAL WORLD...YOUR *BODY*, YOUR *MIND*, YOUR VERY *BEING* IS ENTIRELY SPIRITUAL! YOU SENSE THE SAME THINGS YOU DID IN *LIFE!*

BUT DO NOT *FOOL* YOURSELF! YOU ARE *DEAD!*

BUT YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED ME ...WHERE...*WHERE* ARE THE PEOPLE?

THEY ARE IN THEIR...SHALL WE SAY PRIVATE ROOMS! NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO VENTURE OUT!

BUT COME, YOUR *TOUR* IS ALMOST *OVER* UNTIL THE *MASTER* DECIDES TO SEE YOU AND HEAR YOUR CASE...YOU MUST JOIN THE *OTHERS*...ALSO AWAITING *JUDGMENT!*

DRAKKOS... DENIZEN OF THE DEATH WORLD, EPITOME OF ABSOLUTE EVIL...LEADS THE BEWILDERED HAG TO HER *CAGE*...ONE IN THE MIDST OF *THOUSANDS* STACKED MILE HIGH LIKE SO MANY CARTONS IN A WAREHOUSE! THE EAR-PIERCING SHRIEKS AND CRIES OF HER FELLOWS DEAFENS HER... AND HER MISERY OVERTAKES THE NOW SUDDEN REALIZATION OF THE REALITY OF *DEATH!*

MADAM...ENTER YOUR *CAGE*... THEN AWAIT YOUR CALL BY THE *MASTER!*

YOU CAN'T PUT ME IN *THERE*...IT'S *UNIMAGINABLE!*

GET IN THERE... YOU'VE *ALREADY* BEEN ACCORDED UNPRECEDENTED PRIVILEGES... SO JUST TO GET IN *THERE* AND *SHUT UP!*

AAIIEEE AAIIEEE AAIIEEE

AARRGHHHH IIEEE

LIKE THE INFAMOUS INSTRUMENT OF MEDIEVAL TORTURE THIS UPDATED *SPIKE BOX* SERVES ITS MASTER FAR BETTER THAN ITS PREDECESSOR...FOR THIS COFFIN--CUSHIONED FROM EVERY ANGLE BY DEEP AND BITING FOUR INCH SPIKES--IS DESIGNED TO TORTURE THE *LIVING DEAD*...THOSE WHO CANNOT PRAY FOR DEATH... THOSE WHO CAN ONLY WAIT...AND ENDURE...THE *ETERNAL AGONY!*

TIME PASSES...SLOWLY...TEARS NOW FESTER SORES IN THE OPEN CUTS IN HER FLESH... TIME HAS NO MEANING, NO SUBSTANCE...THEN SHE IS PAID A *VISIT*...

WELL, WOMAN...THE TIME HAS FINALLY *COME* FOR YOUR...*AUDIENCE!*

SO CONFINED HAS SHE BEEN, SO RESTRICTED IN MOVEMENT TO ONLY AN INCH HERE...AN INCH THERE...THAT SHE CAN SCARCELY MOVE! HER BONES HAVE *MOLDED* INTO A FIXED POSITION, HER LEGS WILL HARDLY MOVE...AND SO HER NEW FOUND *FREEDOM* IS NOT A *BLESSING*...BUT A *NIGHTMARE!*

COME QUICKLY...DON'T *STUMBLE!* THE MASTER AWAITS...AND HIS TIME IS VALUABLE! IF WE ARE NOT PROMPT WE WILL *BOTH* SUFFER HIS WRATH!

HERE SHE IS...MASTER! THE NEWEST ACQUISITION! HER NAME IS MADAM DU SADE!

WELCOME...WELCOME! HAS DRAKKOS SHOWN YOU OUR CHAMBER YET...HAVE YOU *DECIDED* WHAT YOU WANT?

I'VE BEEN SHOWN NOTHING...I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT A... CHAMBER...

AH WELL THEN...YOU HAVE A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR YOU...NOT A PLEASANT ONE I REGRET...BUT NEVERTHELESS A GENUINE FIRST RATE SURPISE!

EVERY RESIDENT HAS A *PRIVATE HELL!* THE THING ONE FEARS MOST...

WITH MANY IT IS QUITE *COMMON*... RATS, SNAKES, EVEN SPIKES... THINGS OF THAT SORT! BUT WITH SOME...THE BRAND OF PUNISHMENT IS *UNIQUE!*

COME... I'LL SHOW YOU...

SORRY FOR ALL THESE DRAMATICS...THE CASTLE WALLS, THE OLD OAKEN DOOR...

BUT OUR...RESIDENTS *LIKE* THIS ATMOSPHERE ...MAKES DEATH AND HELL SEEM QUITE COMPLETE!

THIS MAN IN LIFE WAS AN ARSONIST! HE WENT AROUND SETTING FIRE TO BUILDINGS, ANIMALS EVEN PEOPLE --NOW HE'S GETTING HIS JUST REWARDS HERE IN HELL FROM THESE FLAME-TONGUED INSECTS WHO GOBBLE HIS FLESH!

EVERY SO OFTEN THE *RATS* GNAWING ON *THAT* ROPE BREAK THROUGH AND THAT WRETCHED WOMAN SUDDENLY HAS STABBING PAINS IN THE HEART...

...BUT IT HEALS UP QUICKLY ...SPIRITUAL BODIES *ALL* HEAL QUICKLY...READY FOR THE *NEXT ROUND* OF TORTURES!

IN LIFE THAT FELLOW WAS A *PRACTICAL JOKER*... HE WENT AROUND PLAYING FIENDISH PRANKS ON HIS FRIENDS...ONE BACKFIRED AND HIS BEST FRIEND *DIED!*

HIS PUNISHMENT DOESN'T END WITH THE *HANGMAN'S NOOSE* FOR HERE HE THINKS ALL THOSE WRITHING HANDS AND TWITCHING FINGERS ARE HIS FRIENDS SEEKING THEIR *REVENGE!*

HORRIBLE IS IT? HA! HA! WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO JOIN HIM?

NO! NO! PLEASE...IN *HEAVEN'S NAME NO... PLEASE!!*

YOU'LL PAY THE SUPREME PUNISHMENT... FOR EVEN *MENTIONING* THAT *OTHER* PLACE!

YOU'LL **ROT**, WOMAN... ROT IN **ETERNITY** TILL YOUR MISERABLE CARCASS SMELLS LIKE **MANURE!**

BUT I'M INNOCENT... I'M INNOCENT...I'VE DONE **NOTHING** TO DESERVE THIS...NOTHING...

YOU'LL PAY THE **SUPREME** PUNISHMENT ALL RIGHT... **ETERNAL LONELINESS...**

HE WOULDN'T **LISTEN** TO ME... **NO ONE** LISTENS TO ME HERE...

AND SO SHE IS LEFT **ALONE...** BUT TO ENDURE THE MOST **INHUMAN** PUNISHMENT OF **ALL...LONELINESS** AND THE BURDEN OF THE **MIND!**

LEFT TO ROT, HE SAYS... IN THIS MISERABLE HOLE IN THE GROUND SPAWNED OF THE DAMNATION OF SOLITUDE...I'LL GO **INSANE!**

SHE DOES NOT SEE THE **EYES** WATCHING LIKE A SILENT DEMON IN THE **DARKNESS!** EYES THAT ARE **CRUEL** AND WITHOUT A HUMAN SHRED OF **EMOTION.**

WILL YOU NOW...SUCH A SHAME...BUT PERHAPS I CAN **AID** YOU...

VOGT... WHERE DID YOU COME FROM...I THOUGHT I WAS **ALONE!**

CAN IT REALLY BE THAT THE **DEVIL** HIMSELF CAN BE **THWARTED?** THAT **SATAN** IS A FOOL?...THAT HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IS IN LIASON WITH THE FORCES OF... **GOOD?**

YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ALONE ...BUT I CREPT PAST THE UNSEEN GUARDS...I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU!

YOU... TALK TO ME...BUT **WHY?**

BECAUSE I'M NOT SO HARSH AND UNTHINKING AS YOU MIGHT THINK...I BELIEVE IN YOUR **INNOCENCE** ...AND I CAN **HELP** YOU GET OUT OF HERE...AS I HAVE HELPED MANY OTHER **INNOCENTS** FALSELY SUFFERING LIKE YOURSELF...

THERE IS A **WAY** BACK TO THE **EARTH'S SURFACE** AND **FREEDOM!**

AT *LAKE AVERNUS*, IN ITALY IS A CRATER LAKE, JOINED TO THE UNDERGROUND *STYGIAN CREEK*, AN INSURMOUNTABLE BARRIER TO THOSE WHO WOULD *ENTER* ...BUT NOT TO THOSE WHO WOULD *LEAVE*.

I WILL GIVE YOU *DIRECTIONS* TO REACH IT FROM HERE...BUT TO BE RE-UNITED WITH YOUR *EARTH BODY*...TO BECOME AS *ONE* AGAIN IN THE WORLD OF *PHYSICAL* BEINGS...YOU MUST KNOW THE *UNHOLY INCANTATION!*

ON THE SURFACE YOU MUST STAY *'SATAN...MASTER OF NONE...SCOURGE TO NO ONE BUT HIMSELF...I HAVE BECOME FREED IN SOUL AND SPIRIT ...I DEMAND THE RESTITUTION OF LIFE.* THEN YOU WILL BECOME *ONE!*

VOGT WAS *ACCURATE* IN HIS MAPPING OF HER ROUTE...IT WOULD TAKE HER *DAYS* OF TIRING TRAVEL...OF ENDLESS JOURNEY! BUT IT WAS WORTH IT...IT WAS *FREEDOM!*

THE SPIRITUAL BODY NEEDS NO NOURISHMENT...NO FOOD OR DRINK TO KEEP IT ALIVE...BUT EVEN SO THERE IS MORTAL SUFFERING IN THE AGONIZING ENDLESS STRUGGLE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF SANITY...THE TOAD HAG RUNS INTO THE MONSTROUS BATS AGAIN WHO SEEK AFTER RAW FLESH AND COLD UNLIVING BLOOD...

AT LAST...THE LAST BARRIER...THE *RIVER STYX*...IF I CAN MAKE IT ACROSS WITHOUT BEING TRAPPED IN THE EVER ENCIRCLING MAELSTROM I'LL REACH THE *SURFACE*...

AND SO IT APPEARS THAT SATAN *IS* A **FOOL**...TO BE TRICKED SO EASILY BY ONE OF HIS CHARGES! THE TOAD HAG HAS **REACHED** THE EARTH'S SURFACE...HAS ESCAPED FROM THE VERY CORE OF THE EARTH ITSELF...AND FROM THE NOW **SCOWLING** SATAN AS SHE UTTERS THE WORDS THAT FORCES THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS TO **FREE** HER FROM HIS **HOLD** ON HER...

NOW FOR THE INCANTATION... TO BECOME A HUMAN BEING AGAIN...
SATAN, MASTER OF NONE...SCOURGE OF NO ONE BUT HIS CONTEMPTABLE SELF... I HAVE FOUGHT AND FREED MYSELF IN SOUL AND SPIRIT... NOW I DEMAND MY FREEDOM...RELEASE MY SOUL AND GIVE ME LIFE!!

AND SATAN GRINS A GHASTLY SMILE, FOR HIS WORK IS DONE...HIS EVIL HAS TAKEN ROOT AND FORMED INTO THE GROTESQUE SEMI-LIFE THAT ROTS IN THE EARTH-BOUND MENTAL ASYLUM KNOWN AS ***BEDLAM!***

"I WARNED HER, HER CARCASS WOULD ROT UNTIL IT SMELLED LIKE ***MANURE***", SATAN DREW DEEP A BREATH OF SATISFACTION, "SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME, DID SHE VOGT... THAT ***EVERYONE*** HAS THEIR ***OWN*** PECULIAR BRAND OF ***PRIVATE HELL!***"

"THEY ***NEVER*** BELIEVE ME!" 'AYE MASTER', SPAT THE HIDEOUS DWARF TRAITOR, 'AND ***VOGT*** HAS ***AGAIN*** SERVED YOU WELL... LETTING HER THINK SHE WAS ***ESCAPING*** TO FREEDOM AND UNITY WITH HER ***BODY!***"

"SHE THINKS SHE IS ***INNOCENT!*** HAH... INNOCENT...***NO ONE*** IS ***INNOCENT***, VOGT... ***NO ONE!*** AND SO SHE SHALL SUFFER IN HER OWN ***HELL***... THE HELL ON EARTH SHE CHOSE HERSELF... FOR HAD SHE NOT BEEN SO INCREDIBLY ***STUPID*** SHE WOULD HAVE ***REMEMBERED*** THAT HER BODY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN RE-UNITED WITH HER HEAD... THAT THE GUILLOTINED HEADS ARE CHOPPED UP...AND USED AS ***DOG MEAT!***"

AND SATAN, BOWING LOW HIS GRAY DISSIMULATION, DISAPPEARED! THE TOAD HAG ***LIVES***...FOR EVEN AS ***SATAN*** HAS HIS VILE BEDLAM AFTER THE GRAVE...WE ON EARTH-SIDE HAVE OUR ***OWN*** BEDLAM...THE ASYLUM FOR THE INCURABLY ***INSANE!*** AND IS THERE MAN ALIVE WHO WOULD DARE TO QUESTION THAT THE NOTORIOUS TOAD HAG OF ***PARIS DU COMITÉ REFORME*** IS CURABLE?..FOR THE WRITHING IDIOT CHAINED TO BEDLAM IS HEADLESS...AND DECAPITATION IS INCURABLE!

NOW ON SALE

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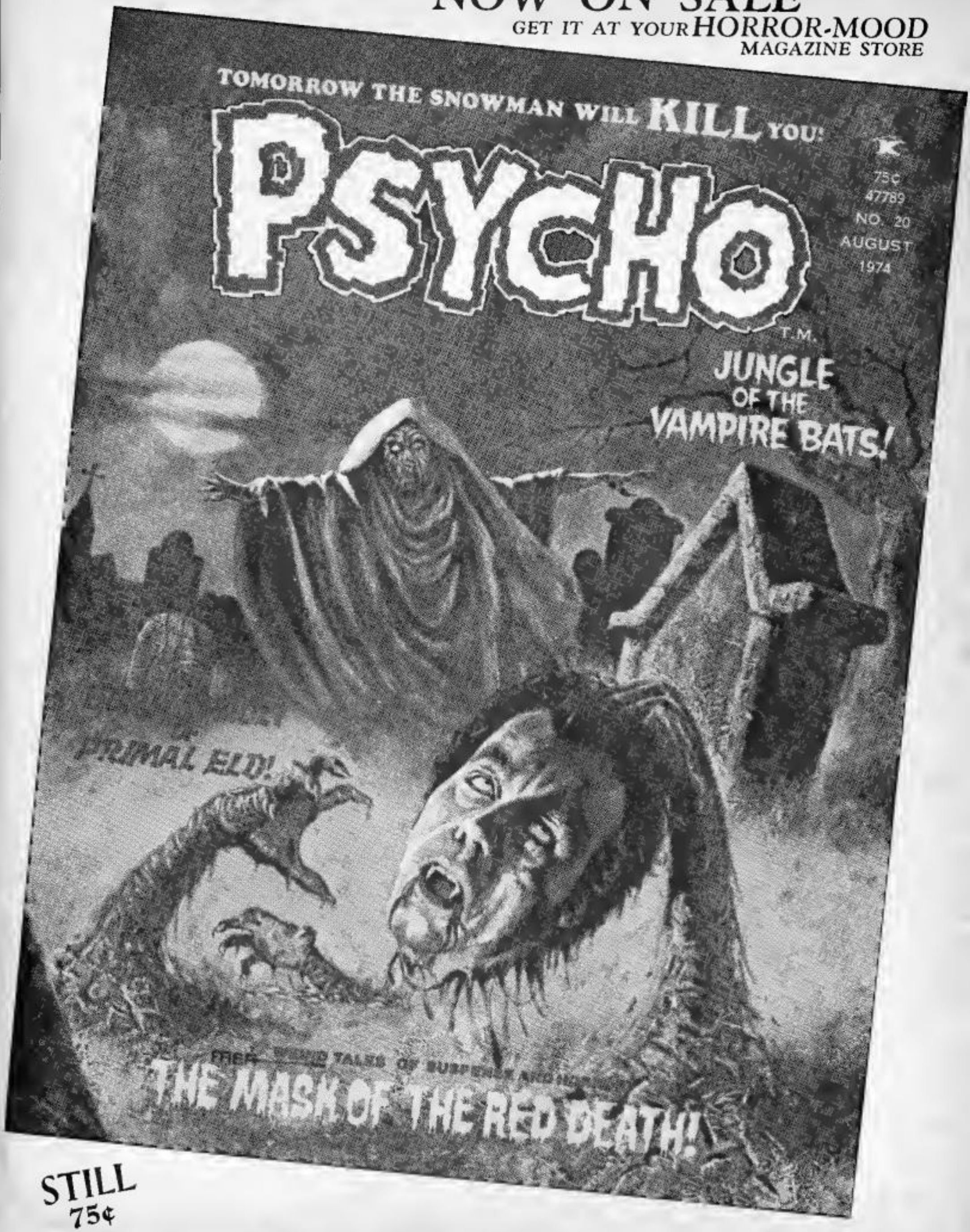

STILL
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THE SAGA OF THE VICTIMS
...WITH CROSSES!
YAAAAAAAAAAAAA
LORD... LOOK AT HIM!
...FLESH AND BONE IS GROWING ON HIM... NATURE IS TWISTING EVERYTHING INTO REVERSE...

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